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THE WATER DRINKERS  
OF THE BIBLE

—:—  
J. W. KIRTON LL.D.

—  
AUTHOR OF

“BUY YOUR OWN CHERRIES”









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THE  
WATER DRINKERS  
OF THE  
BIBLE.

BY

JOHN W. KIRTON, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "BUY YOUR OWN CHERRIES," "THE FOUR PILLARS OF TEMPERANCE,"  
"HAPPY HOMES, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM," ETC.



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# THE WATER DRINKERS OF THE BIBLE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE DIVINE LAW OF DRINK.

Y the Water-drinkers of the Bible, we wish it to be understood, that we mean those whose habit was that of using water as a beverage, and also who were noted for abstaining from intoxicating drinks. Just as it was the custom among the Greeks for the phrase "a water-drinker" to have this special meaning, so it has of late years become the practice in our own country to infer the same. To abstain from wine and strong drink invariably leads to the remark, "Then you are a water-drinker, I suppose."

It is from this standpoint that we propose taking a brief glance at some of the persons whose history is recorded in the Word of God, that we may be able to manifest how much is to be found there to sustain the total abstainer in his practice, and to illustrate how clear it is, he has nothing to fear, or anything worth having to lose, by being associated with those who of old time were induced either for a long or short period to avoid "wine and strong drink," and to be content with "honest water" instead.

While thus endeavouring to call attention to the Water-drinkers of the Bible, it is, however, very important to bear in mind that we do not mean that they drank all kinds of water, any more than when the word wine occurs, it of necessity implies that all kinds of wine were used. The word water, like the word wine, is a generic term, and it is needful to be careful in the recognition of this, or we shall be sure to fall into error. Every school-boy knows that there is a vast difference between good and bad water, hard and soft water, clean and dirty water, fresh and salt water, pure and impure water, medicated and other water. Why, even in Paradise man was prohibited from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. "Thou shalt not" is therefore not a new idea in its application to daily life. It therefore becomes most important even in using such a simple thing as water, to take care that we drink only that kind which is fit and proper to supply the body with what it requires, for if we fail to recognise this law, we shall sooner or later have to suffer the consequences, and pay the penalty for neglecting this most sensible method of taking care of the body intrusted to our care.

Ordinary readers of the Bible, if they will only take the trouble to notice it, will find that there are several kinds of water mentioned, and that some of them are anything but good or innocent. Take for example the following:—There are the "waters of Marah," because of the quarrelling, the contention, and the murmuring of the Israelites against Moses and against God, and hence called the "water of bitterness" (Exod. xvi. 23; Num. xx. 1, 2, &c.). There is also "the bitter water which causeth a curse" (Num. v. 18-28). The Psalmist speaks of "water of a full cup being wrung out to the wicked" (Ps. lxxiii. 10). Referring no doubt to these "bitter" waters. There are "the waters of Jericho" which "was naught," and into which Elisha had to cast salt to heal them, ere

the people could drink them without risk of death (2 Kings ii. 19-21).

All this plainly indicates that man is expected to exercise his powers of observation and reflection, even in the selection of such a needful drink as water, and if he fails to do so, he has himself only to blame, and not God, should any evil results attend his neglect.

It is no disparagement of the grace of God to affirm, that it will not counteract the effect or hinder the influence of Opium, any more than it is reasonable to expect that it will enable a Christian to breathe a poisonous atmosphere, or drink any kind of poisonous liquor without suffering more or less from its injurious influence. If people drink intoxicating liquors, the most orthodox preaching will not avail to keep them sober. They will be perfectly safe if they abstain altogether from such drinks, but, to expect either to prevent intemperance or to cure it, so long as such drinks are used, is as vain as to expect people to be cured of fever, while they continue to breathe foul air, or to drink poisoned water. The physical laws which are in operation work in precisely the same direction towards the stomach of the most orthodox Christian, as certainly as they do towards the most determined sceptic, corrupt infidel, or boasting atheist.

Dr. T. Brown, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, illustrates the importance of recognising this important rule when he said: "The influence of language, as the direct medium of thought, perpetuates by habitual use the prejudices involved in the original meaning of certain words, or by accidental association conveys peculiar differences of meaning to the minds of different individuals, and thus strengthens and fixes in each many separate prejudices, in addition to the general prejudices of mankind." And even Archbishop Whately in his "Logic," Book III., chap. 5, referring to the influence of words on thought, remarks: "'Men imagine,' says Bacon, 'that their minds have

the command of language; but it often happens that language bears rule over the mind.”

The Bible tells us over and over again how wells were dug and sunk,—not how breweries and distilleries were erected. We read of prayers for rain—cooling springs—of Jordan being divided by the power of God—of the Red Sea becoming a passage for the children of Israel away from their enemies—of the hard rock supplying them with its precious blessing while in the wilderness. It tells us how David extols it; how Job proclaims its goodness. It speaks to us of the rivers of pleasure—that bread shall be given and water shall be sure. Everywhere it is used as an emblem of blessing, of life, and of joy. It speaks also of the reward which shall be awarded to him that “giveth a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple,” but never of a blessing to him who gives a glass of ale, or a glass of grog, or wine. Water is used as an emblem of salvation, while wine is used as an emblem of God’s wrath. In every way it comes to us as a “thing of beauty and a joy for ever.”

Everywhere in the Bible water is referred to in the most striking and suggestive terms. Whether in its fulness, its freeness, or its adaptation to man, beast, or the trees of the forest, it is always spoken of as a blessing. It gathers its lessons from the river, gladdening the dry place—the dew from the womb of the morning—the rain upon the mown grass—the rain filling the pools—the streams from Lebanon—the waters of life—the fountains of living waters—the rivers of His pleasures—the rivers of living waters—a well watered garden—a spring of water whose waters fail not—from a fruitful bough by a well of living waters—from drawing water out of the wells of salvation—dropping like the rain—and distilling like the dew, proving that—

“Water is best for the trees of the forest,  
Water is best for the flowers of the field;  
Streams from the mountains are flowing in beauty,  
Purest of pleasure for ever they yield.

Water is best for the rich and the mighty,  
Water is best for the humblest that toil ;  
Children and fathers may drink from the fountain,  
Flowing for ever to gladden the soil."

While its cleansing and purifying influence is referred to, as emblematic of the blessings of salvation also in many ways.

In that wonderful 104th Psalm, whether written by David or not it does not matter, we find some marvelous illustrations. It is said by Humboldt to present a picture of the entire Cosmos ; and he adds : " We are astonished to see, within the compass of a poem of such small dimensions, the universe, the heavens, and the earth, drawn with a few grand strokes." It is surprising how rapid are the touches. Is it God ? " He is clothed with light as a garment." Is it the waters ? The poet shows them in flood, covering the face of the earth, and as they now lie enclosed within their embankments to break forth no more for ever. The springs ? He traces them, by an inspired glance, as they run among the hills, as they give drink to the wild and lonely creatures of the wilderness, as they nourish the boughs in which the birds sing, the grass on which the cattle feed, the herb, the corn, the olive-tree, and the vine derive their source of life.

Isaiah says that " The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty " (Isa. xxi. 14), and in another place speaks of the time when " He will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail " (Isa. xxxii. 6) ; and when prophesying the flourishing of Christ's kingdom among the blessings that shall be given, he enumerates, " In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water " (Isa. xxxv. 6, 7) ; and again, " I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground " (Isa. xlv. 3) ; and referring to the passage of Israel from Egypt he adds, " And they thirsted not when God led them through

the deserts; He caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them; He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out" (Isa. xlviii. 21). Every one that thirsteth is urged to come to the waters (Isa. lv. 1), and in giving a vivid picture of the Church's restoration he says: "They shall not hunger nor thirst . . . for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them" (Isa. xlix. 10).

Judged by the law of contrasts, the use of water stands immeasurably above that of intoxicating wine and strong drink in the Word of God, whether it is measured by precept, example, or any other method. For instance—(1.) The Bible nowhere condemns total abstinence from intoxicating wine and strong drink, but it does over and over again approve of water-drinking. (2.) The Bible nowhere associates God's blessing with the use of intoxicating wine and strong drink, but it does with that of water. (3.) The Bible nowhere sanctions with God's blessing the use of intoxicating wine and strong drink, but it does with the use of water. (4.) The Bible in several places records that God commands one and another to abstain from intoxicating wine and strong drink, but in no one instance does He do so with water. (5.) The Bible nowhere tells us that God approves of the use of intoxicating wine and strong drink, but it does of many instances where the use of water has His approval. (6.) The Bible teaches the value and blessedness of water-drinking, but nowhere that of intoxicating drinks. (7.) The Bible associates the gift of peculiar wisdom and piety with the use of water, and also the loss of piety by the use of intoxicating drink. (8.) The Bible abounds with warnings against the use of intoxicating wine and strong drinks, but in no instance does it do so with the use of water. (9.) The Bible gives terrible examples of good men—Noah, Lot, priests and prophets—falling through strong drink; but it records instances where security, safety, and blessing were enjoyed by

Samuel, Daniel, Timothy, and John the Baptist, and others, who were water-drinkers. (10.) The Bible says that it is not for kings to drink intoxicating wine, nor for princes strong drink, lest they forget the law and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted; but it also records that when the last of the prophets and the first of the Judges was to be born, he and his mother were both commanded to be water-drinkers. (11.) The Bible nowhere records that either individuals or nations were ever in any way better for the use of intoxicating wine or strong drink; but it does tell us of those who were made worse by using them. (12.) The Bible warns us that "no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven," but it invites all who wish to enter the blessedness of heaven to "come and take of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). (13.) For one instance in the Bible where intoxicating wine or strong drink *appears* to be countenanced, there are thousands of examples where water-drinking is divinely recognised, sanctioned, and blessed.

It is also remarkable to notice in how many instances water is used in the Word of God as emblematic of great spiritual or of temporal blessings. For instance, it is said, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass" (Deut. xxxii. 2); "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isa. xii. 3); "In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (Isa. xxxv. 6, 7); "He shall bless thy bread and thy water" (Exod. xxiii. 25); "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth on Me as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37, 38). The Israelites are blamed for "having forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewing out broken cisterns that hold no water" (Jer. ii. 13); "He



shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth" (Ps. lxxii. 6); "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 6); "He that watereth shall be watered himself" (Prov. xi. 25); "Thou shalt be like a well-watered garden (Isa. lviii. 11); "I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it" (Isa. xxvii. 3). These are but a few examples of how highly *water* is esteemed, and the exalted place it occupies in the mind and Word of God.

We are also aware that the words "wine" and "strong drinks" occur over and over again in the Bible; but it should be remembered that the Hebrew word *shechar*, used in the Old Testament—sometimes translated "wine," but more frequently "strong drink"—is no true likeness of "the strong drink" of the present day. It means the fluids obtained from dates, palms, and such-like; the liquid product of the orchard, as *yayin* is the liquid product of the vineyard. Whisky, brandy, rum, and gin—the principal agents of our modern intemperance, and constituting, moreover, when sweetened and diluted, the fashionable drinks among all sorts and conditions of men and women—together with all kinds of ales, stouts, porters, and ciders, were in all probability unknown when the Bible was written; so that to use Scripture words to sanction their use, is altogether unwarrantable, and, therefore, wrong.

According to Kitto's "Biblical Cyclopædia" the word "strong drink" means one of three things:—(1.) Sweet saccharine syrup from dates or palms, unfermented; used either as a sweetmeat, or as a drink when diluted with water; of course unintoxicating. (2.) Wine from the date or palm, sweet, fresh, unfermented, un-intoxicating. (3.) The wine of the palm, fermented, bitter, intoxicating. It *may* have any of these three meanings; the context will tell which. It is used twenty-three times in the Old Testament. In twenty-one of these it is spoken of in terms of warning or disapproval; in the

remaining two, its employment is alluded to in connection with religious ordinances. As to the former, therefore, are we not to infer that the fermented, intoxicating is meant; while in the latter examples the allusion is to the unfermented—such things being alone allowable according to the ritual of the Jewish religion. And here, accordingly, we may at once, in passing, dispose of one class of objectors—not a small one, and inclusive even of some theologians—who quote the passage in Deut. xiv. 26 as a proof that God permits the joyous, free, social use of “strong drink.”

If, therefore, such intoxicating drinks as are now in ordinary use as beverages and articles of social intercourse were not known or in existence in Judea 1800 years ago or more, and the wines in those times were of two kinds, unfermented and fermented,—unintoxicating and intoxicating,—and the former were to say the least as frequently used as the latter, and drunkenness was comparatively rare in these days, and therefore the people had then the *option* of choosing between drinking either those which they knew would *not* intoxicate or those which would, is it not reasonable to infer that both custom and propriety would lead them, as in modern times they still do, in grape-growing and wine-producing countries, to esteem unfermented as the best, and therefore they would use the safe and avoid the dangerous, just so far as they had any regard for their own welfare, or that of others.

This fact respecting the nature of these wines has been recognised by many authors not by any means connected with the temperance movement. Take for example the following testimony from *Chambers's Journal* (23rd September, 1865) on “Vintages Old and New,” where the writer thus describes the wines of the ancients: “Some of their wines were sour, others were mawkishly sweet; many were atrociously muddy and thick, syrups rather than wines!! To this day there are strong red and amber-coloured wines in Central

Asia, whose consistency is that of weak jelly, and which require to be eaten rather than drunk. If we may trust those kind historians who now and then interrupt the grand pageant of combats and coronations to give us a peep at the social life of the dead world, many a Roman emperor, many a purple-filleted Cæsar, had his gemmed cup filled with such a glutinous production as this."

It is believed by some commentators that the use of wine was not known till after the deluge, when Noah planted a vineyard. On the other hand it is thought by others, and among them Dean Alford, in remarking upon our Lord's words in Matt. xxiv. 38, "It is a mistake to imagine that we have in Gen. ix. 20 the account of the *first* wine and its effects." Milton, on the other hand, evidently believed that the fruit of which our first parents ate was of an intoxicating nature, for he says:—

"That now,  
As with new wine intoxicated both  
They swim in mirth."

And again,—

"Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit  
That with exhilarating vapour bland  
About their spirits had played, and inmost powers  
Made err, was now exhaled."

Whichever opinion may be adopted, one thing is equally remarkable and suggestive—that the *first* time intoxicating liquor is named in the Bible it is associated with intemperance. Surely this could not have been written as an encouragement to the wine drinker, but as a warning. Butler, the author of "Hudibras," thus alludes to the "pleasant poison":—

"*Which* since has overwhelmed and drowned  
Far greater numbers on dry ground  
Of wretched mankind, one by one,  
Than e'er the flood before had done."

It is a most important fact that there are about *one*

*hundred and twenty* warnings and admonitions in the Bible *against* intoxicating drinks; while, on the contrary (if we exclude those texts which refer to wine-fruit), there are not above *twenty* instances where the Bible speaks of wine under all its names with approval. It is also worthy of remark that in even these very little is said by way of commendation; while, on the other hand, language of the most emphatic character is employed to warn men from indulging or allowing themselves to be influenced in any way by its terrible ensnaring power. It matters not whether this arises from its alcoholic or drugged nature, it is equally condemned because it *intoxicates*, and it is therefore on this account not fit to be used as a beverage; and for that reason, all who value their safety and welfare should take heed to the Divine warnings, and have nothing whatever to do with it, if they would escape from its influence, and be free from its power.

We may, without hesitation, say that never was greater injustice done to any book than has been done by moderate drinkers to the Bible. If hemlock or hellebore, which belong to the same class of poisons as alcohol, had been substituted for wine and strong drink, or, as we call them in more modern times, "wines and spirituous liquors," as ordinary articles of diet, we should have been less surprised to find them quoted with approval, because they are neither even so much as named in the Word of God, while wine and strong drink are over and over again referred to in the most unfavourable terms, so that they may be shunned as a foe, and avoided as a mocker. There is no legal prohibition in the Bible against the use of Opium or Arsenic, or many other poisons known to the ancients; but the command "Thou shalt not kill" covers all such things whether named or not, if they are proved to be destructive to life. In like manner Alcohol is condemned by the testimony of science and experience. Wisely does Dr. Candlish say, "We have greatly to fear a style of

interpretation of Scripture which is resorted to by those who are peculiarly anxious to limit its authority. It is this. There is a class of interpreters who insist upon everything being proved out of Scripture by plain and explicit statements. You need not point or show what is involved in Scripture; you need not draw arguments from Scripture; you need not plead the authority of the Apostles or their example, unless you can show, with chapter and verse, the express and unequivocal deliverance fully upon the point. Now, this is the most dangerous of all the forms of incipient infidelity. It was, therefore, with great wisdom that the compilers of our standards inserted into these standards a declaration, that whatsoever can be proved by argument from Scripture, while not contained in explicit terms in the Scriptures, must be held to be an intimation of the mind of God, and, as such, binding upon us. The Holy Scriptures were composed for men—men having understanding—men capable of reasoning, and of intelligent deduction of principles. The Holy Scriptures are an announcement, not of points and details, but of broad general principles." Yes, and he might have added with equal truthfulness—principles for all time, and in the application of which men must continue to exercise their understanding as to how far, and in what direction, they should be brought to bear, in order to accomplish the great purposes of Him whose great mission is to "seek and to save the lost," by "destroying the works of the devil."

"It would be easy to show," says Rev. B. Parsons, "that the golden age of every nation was the age when it drank water; and that the period of its downfall was the period when it exchanged water for wine. The wine-drinking Nineveh and Babylon succumbed to an army of teetotalers. The Persians in turn became wine-bibbers, and yielded to teetotal Germans. Greece yielded to Rome, yet the golden age of Rome was an age of teetotalism. Wine-drinking Rome was obliged

to ask for the defence of her effeminate sons the sword of teetotal barbarians. The whole wine-drinking world trembled like a leaf before the water-drinking Saracens; these in turn became luxurious, disobeyed the laws of the Koran respecting total abstinence, and then trembled before the teetotal Turks; these, again, became debased by luxury and wine, and succumbed to the Ottoman water-drinker. At the present time by far the greater portion of mankind are water-drinkers."

The arrangements made by the Almighty in the Garden of Eden clearly indicate, that He had adapted everything to promote the happiness of those He had placed within its bounds. It was evidently rich and fertile, and furnished with every suitable accommodation, and "well watered," by a large river which ran through it, which afterwards divided itself into four considerable branches. Then we are told he was to "dress" and to "keep" the garden, thus implying that in providing man with employment, he would be able by a proper occupation of his time and efforts to promote his happiness, inasmuch as sloth and inactivity have ever been found the bane of man.

"When we think of Paradise," says Bishop Horne, "we think of it as the seat of delight. The name EDEN authorises us to do so. It signifies PLEASURE, and the idea of pleasure is inseparable from that of a garden, where man still seeks after lost happiness, and where perhaps a good man finds the nearest resemblance of it which this world affords." And another with equal truth and beauty adds, "What is requisite to make a wise and a happy man, but reflection and peace? And both are the natural product of a garden; a garden to the virtuous is a paradise still extant, a paradise unlost." "No other sort of abode," once said one of our great statesmen who spent the latter part of his life in cultivating a garden, "seems to contribute so much both to tranquillity of mind and indolence of body. The sweetness of the air, the pleasantness of the smell, the

verdure of plants, the cleanness and lightness of food, the exercise of working or walking, but, above all, the exemption from care and solicitude, seems equally to favour and improve both contemplation and health, the enjoyment of sense, and imagination, and thereby the quiet and ease both of body and soul. A garden has been the inclination of kings and the choice of philosophers, the common favourite of public and private men, the pleasure of the greatest, the care of the meanest—an employment and a possession for which no man is too high nor too low. If we believe the Scriptures, we must allow that God Almighty esteemed the life of man in a garden, the happiest he could give him, or else He would not have placed Adam in that Eden.\*

By almost universal consent, water is called Adam's ale, thus implying that it was the best beverage he could have to meet the wants of his daily life. Hence we read that when God placed him for the first time in Eden, that He also provided him with a river to water the garden, and that "from thence it parted and became four heads," in other words there were four rivers of water,—but *not a drop of alcohol*, because there was no brewery, distillery, or wine manufactory to produce it and so lead him to wrong doing.

In addition to this God said, "Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; *to you it shall be for meat.*" In this we thus also see the Divine law of food clearly laid down. Evidently such was the intention of the Divine Being, and surely He must have known what His children would really need, and what would be the best adapted to meet their wants. Man may reverse this law and say, "*To me it shall not be for meat,*" but he can never by doing so, improve upon the Divine arrangement. Wisely therefore does one say, speaking of "THE CORN'S VOICE":—

\* Sir William Temple's "Gardens of Epicurus."

"I was made to be eaten, and not to be drank ;  
 To be husked in a barn, not soaked in a tank,  
 I come as a blessing when put in a mill,  
 As a blight and a curse, when run through a still.  
 Make me up into loaves, and your children are fed ;  
 Put into drink, I'll starve them instead.  
 In bread I'm a servant, the eater shall rule,  
 In drink I'm a master, the drinker a fool,  
 Then remember my warning, my strength I'll employ,  
 If eaten to strengthen, if drunk to destroy."

Speaking of the Divine adaptation of water to supply the need of man, Dr. Carpenter in his "Manual of Physiology" remarks : "Water serves as the medium by which all alimentary material is introduced into the system ; for until dissolved in the juices of the stomach, food cannot be truly received into the economy. It is water which holds the organisable materials of the blood either in solution or suspension ; and thus serves to convey them through the minutest capillary pores into the substance of the solid tissues. It is water which, mingled in various proportions with the solid components of the various textures gives to them the consistence they require. And it is water which takes up the products of their decay, and conveys them by a most complicated system of sewerage altogether out the system. . . . No other liquid can supply its place, and the deprivation of water is felt even more severely than the deprivation of food."

THIRST is the natural sign calling for drink, and no one can deny this fact, that to one really thirsty nothing answers the purpose so well as water ; and it has this additional advantage, that when it has accomplished its purpose, it ceases to be acceptable or even palatable. Hence Shakespeare, with that far-seeing penetration for which he is so remarkable, observes—

"Honest water, too weak to be a sinner."

And if mankind had been content with it, thousands would not have become such sinners as they have, in many parts of the world.



In Oriental countries, water is to this day held in the highest estimation, and it is all the more appreciated because it is, at times, difficult to obtain. To the traveller over the parched deserts, the appearance of a fountain or spring of water is hailed as a signal blessing. Dr. Jamieson, in his "Eastern Manners," tells us that "Of all the accidents to which these journeys are liable, that which the parched character of the country renders the most frequent, and which is attended with the most disastrous effects, is the want of water. That element may be said to be, in these regions, the greatest necessary of life, and no idea can be formed by Europeans of the vast quantity required, during a march over the desert, by a single person, whose palate is continually parched by the effects of the fiery atmosphere and ground, and whose food, consisting of preparations of flour and butter, is calculated to excite thirst in the greatest degree. The usual computation is, that about twenty pounds of water are required for the daily consumption of a man."

Water, in its Divine adaptation, even to seeming opposite uses, has been thus well illustrated:—

"Simple though it seems,

Emblem of imbecility itself,  
 As most regard it, yet, in fact, the food  
 Of all organic life ; the fruitful source  
 Of power in human arts ; and in the clouds,  
 The storm, the mountain-stream, the placid lake,  
 The ocean's roaring, and the glacier's sheen,  
 The landscape's frostwork, or its icy gems,  
 Hence spring the beautiful and the sublime.  
 A power, indeed, pervading nature through ;  
 Now moving noiseless through organic tubes,  
 To keep stagnation from the vital frame ;  
 And now the Atlantic dashing to the skies,  
 Or rushing down Niagara's rocky steep,  
 Earth trembling, staggering, underneath the shock.  
 Effects so diverse, opposite, to gain  
 By one mild element, a problem this,  
 No wisdom, short of Infinite, could solve."

Indeed, we may add that no one can read with care

the sacred Scriptures without coming to the conclusion that whether we consider the character of the climate, the nature of the journeys of the people, and their general habits, water, wells, streams, &c., must be a very important point in providing for their well-being in many ways; no wonder, therefore, that the Oriental mind is almost incapable of the shameless ingratitude from which even many professing Christians among us are not wholly free—of speaking with contempt of, and despising as if beneath their regard, the only fluid which is absolutely essential to preserve life, as well as so largely to promote their comfort. It is still true that

“Till taught by pain  
Men know not what good water’s worth.”

The celebrated Jonathan Edwards clearly recognises the importance of our being ready to learn lessons concerning our duty, not only from the positive commands of God, but also from the experience of daily life. He says: “The mind and will of God, concerning any duty to be performed by us, may be sufficiently revealed in His Word, without any particular precept, in so many express terms, enjoining it. The human understanding is the ear to which the Word of God is spoken; and if it be so spoken, that the ear may plainly hear it, it is enough (or ought to be). God is Sovereign as to the manner of speaking His mind, whether He will speak it in express terms, or whether He will speak it by saying several other things which imply it, and from which we may, by comparing them together, plainly perceive it. If the mind of God be but revealed—if there be but sufficient means for the communication of His mind to our minds, that is sufficient; whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with our eyes; or whether we see the thing which He would signify to us by the eye of reason, and understanding.”

These considerations very naturally suggest some practical reflections:—

1. That we should feel thankful that God has supplied the children of men with such a needful article in such abundance.

2. We should feel grateful He has made it so suitable to meet the daily wants of life.

3. We should praise Him for making it so good in itself, and the source of so much good to those who use it in harmony with His laws.

4. We should bless His name that He has associated its use with the highest and noblest work to which He has called His servants.

5. We should feel grateful that He has used it as the symbol of the highest spiritual blessings He gives to His children,—“Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

6. We should rejoice that He has given us in His word the examples of so many good, wise, and holy persons, as illustrations of the wisdom and safety of abstaining from intoxicating drinks, and being satisfied with nature's beverage—WATER.

7. Alcohol, and any drink containing such a poison, is not needful for man, or it would have formed part of those things which God would have provided in nature.

8. It is man's duty to apply solely for food those things which God has so clearly adapted to supply the daily wants of life.

9. To waste or destroy such food by converting it into intoxicating drink, is clearly opposed to the Divine will, and is therefore wrong.

10. To pervert such good gifts, by converting them into a poisonous drink which corrupts the souls and destroys the bodies of the people, ought to be regarded as the wilful disobeying of the Divine command, “To you it shall be for *meat*.”

11. Therefore all good citizens should combine to procure a law, which shall prevent such food from being destroyed, so that the hungry may be fed, and the social and moral evils resulting from the manufacture and

sale of such drinks may be prevented. God's benevolence ought not to be allowed to be thus frustrated by man's selfishness.

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## CHAPTER II.

### HAGAR AND ISHMAEL; OR, THE FIRST JOURNEY ON WATER.



HAGAR signifies "a stranger." She was a native of Egypt, and servant of Abraham, but we have no means of ascertaining how or when she became an inmate of his home. This name no doubt was given to her after her arrival from Egypt. It is supposed she was one of the female slaves presented to Abraham by Pharaoh during his visit to that place (see Gen. xii. 10). Some writers, however, say that her name signifies "to flee," and suppose it to have been applied to her from the fact that when Sarah her mistress manifested considerable harshness towards her, and "afflicted" her, she determined to flee. Having formed this resolution, she took the direction leading back again to her friends and relatives in Egypt. This led her to what was afterwards called Shur, through a long tract of sandy, uninhabited country, lying on the west of Arabia Petraea, to the extent of 150 miles between Palestine and Egypt. Having reached that lonely region she sat down by a *fountain of water* to replenish her skin bottle, and recruit her wearied limbs, and perhaps ponder amid its solitude, her future course. While thus engaged, an angel of the Lord appeared, and in the kindest manner remonstrated with her about the course she was pursuing, and advised her to return back again to her mistress and house, assuring her that ere long she would bare a son, whom Providence had

destined to become a great man, and whose wild and special features of character would be so stamped upon his descendants that they should never be effaced. She could not but listen with profound attention to such startling words from the angel as he said: "Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren" (Gen. xvi. 11, 12); and when he had finished she felt assured that she might fully rely upon the ultimate fulfilment of the promise. Having thus arrived at such conclusion she prepared to return, but ere she departed "she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me; for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi ('the well of Him that liveth and seeth me'); behold it is between Kadesh and Bered" (Gen. xvi. 13, 14).

It is a curious circumstance that to this day the Mohammedans, who are also water drinkers, hold Hagar in very high regard, and call her by the significant title "Mother Hagar," concluding that she was the lawful wife of Abraham. The origin of this strange admiration of the Egyptian slave, is probably owing to the fact that her son Ishmael was to be so closely identified with the Arabians. While in Paul's epistle to the Galatians (iv. 24, 25), the name Hagar is used allegorically to represent the inferior condition of the Jewish people under the law, to that of Christians under the Gospel. In fact they are as much inferior as the handmaid Hagar was to Sarah, the lawful and legitimate wife of the patriarch.

Hagar speedily retraced her steps, and in due time arrived back and settled down in the tent of Abraham. Having probably watched her opportunity, she told her master of the remarkable interview she had with the

angel, and made him acquainted with the character of the promise which had been given her; the result was that when her son was born, Abraham called his name Ishmael, which being interpreted, means "God shall hear."

Fourteen years passed away, during which several stirring incidents in connection with Abraham's career took place, which, if space permitted, might be given, but we confine ourselves to that particular event which had so much to do with the future history of Ishmael. It came to pass that Sarah bare a son in her old age, whose name was called Isaac. This, of course, led to new departures in several ways, which was quickly recognised both by Hagar and Ishmael. Nothing, however, of a very special character seems to have occurred until the weaning of Isaac, which is generally supposed to have taken place when he was about three years of age. By that time Ishmael was about seventeen, and therefore old enough to be able to understand the altered condition of things so far as he was concerned. But, it appears that when he saw Isaac clothed according to custom with the sacred symbolic robe which was the badge of his birthright to the inheritance and heir of the tribe, he could not restrain his feelings, and gave unmistakable evidence of his disappointment by "mocking" at the feast. This, when it was discovered, gave mortal offence to Sarah, and seems to have made her resolve from that time never to rest until both Hagar and Ishmael were completely driven or expelled from their home. This must have been a terrible blow, as may be imagined, to Hagar. Ishmael was to all intents and purposes the prospective heir, the inheritor of the name, estate, and influence. But now all that was changed, and every hope shattered to the winds. It was but natural that, under such circumstances, she felt disappointed to see all her hopes and affections which had centred for so many years on her son, transferred to another, and, to

make matters worse, for them both to be turned adrift in the world to do the best they could for themselves. This kind of reflection could only result in bad feeling, rage, and resentment, and the issue was that both she and her son conspired to irritate and insult the rightful mistress of the house to such an extent, that, exasperated by their abuse and annoyed by their conduct, Sarah demanded of her husband that they should be expelled. It was difficult for Abraham to do otherwise than comply, though it must be clear that his heart yet beat with fond affection towards his firstborn; and it must have cut him to the very quick, thus to turn his own child out of doors, and send him and his mother away alone into the wilderness.

But God overruled this family quarrel for good in a manner the aged patriarch never expected; for, when most cast down and hesitating what course to pursue, his scruples were removed by the timely appearance of his God, who said: "Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of thy bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed" (Gen. xxi. 12, 13).

It thus came to pass that this family quarrel became another illustration of an overruling Providence which for 4000 years has separated two mighty peoples, who, according to the prophecy, continue to occupy an important chapter in the history of man. As Dr. Keith remarks:—"The descendants of Ishmael have ever maintained their prophetic character, they have remained, under every change of condition, a wild people; their hand has been still against every man, and every man's hand against them." While the sceptic Gibbon has even to confess that "the arms of Sesostrius, Cyrus, Pompey, and Trajan could never achieve their conquest," and that they are "armed against mankind." While Sir R. K. Porter in his "Travels"

says:—"On the smallest computation such must have been the manners of these people for more than 3000 years; thus in all things verifying the prediction given of Ishmael at his birth, that he in his posterity should be a wild man, and always continue to be so, though they should dwell for ever in the presence of their brethren. And that an acute and active people, surrounded for ages by polished and luxurious nations, should, from their earliest to their latest times, be still found a wild people, dwelling in the presence of all their brethren (as we may call these nations), unsubdued and unchangeable, is indeed a standing miracle—one of those mysterious facts which establish the truth of prophecy."

Abraham, when sending them away, we are told, "rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a *bottle of water*, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba."

Eastern travellers, to this day, furnish themselves with precisely the same provisions. The bottles are made of the whole skins of kids or goats, the neck serving for the mouth, and the thighs for handles; these are easily fastened on the back of an animal, or slung across a pedestrian's shoulder. We are then told, "And the *water* was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went and sat her down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bowshot; for she said, 'Let me not see the death of the child.' And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, 'What ailest thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand, for I will make of him a great nation.'" And God opened her eyes, and she saw a *well of water*;



and she went and *filled the bottle with water*, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew," etc. (Gen. xxi. 14-20).

One lesson seems naturally to suggest itself from this beautiful incident, touching and affecting as it is in all its details. It is said that "God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water." Does not this very clearly show us that, just as Hagar needed to have her eyes opened to see what was already in existence so near to her, in like manner many Christians need to have their eyes opened, ere they are ready to see the truth. Our seeing the truth does not make it true. Neither does an unwillingness to see nullify that truth. Truth exists whether we see it or not. It behoves us, therefore, to be ready and willing to search for it, and to receive it, that its blessings may become ours without delay.



## CHAPTER III.

### REBEKAH, THE MAID BY THE WELL.



ABOUT 1898 B.C., and when Abraham was one hundred years old, and his wife ninety, she bare him a son, who received the name of Isaac. The reason for the adoption of this name has reference to the laughter occasioned by the first announcement of the Divine intention. When the babe had grown to be a youth, his father was commanded to offer him,—“Thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest,”—for a burnt-offering. Abraham proceeded to do as he was told, but just as he was on the point of slaying his son, his hand was withheld by God, and a ram provided in his place instead.

Isaac appears to have passed his youthful days at

home, under his parents' eye, engaged in the care of the flocks and herds. When he was about forty years of age, his father wished to see him married, and sent one of his trusty servants, Eliezer by name, to Mesopotamia, to choose, under the Divine direction, a partner among his own relations for his beloved son, in order to prevent his marriage among the daughters of Canaan. After taking a solemn oath to his master to be faithful, he departed on his important errand.

Upon Eliezer's arrival near the city of Nahor, we are told that he made his camels kneel down by a well, evidently with the intention of supplying them with some water as quickly as possible. After such a journey no doubt the whole retinue were weary with their journey.

ABRAHAM also helps us to appreciate the value of water. When he was under the necessity of sending Hagar and Ishmael away, we noticed that he provided them with a bottle of water (Gen. xxi. 14). And on another occasion we are told: "And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of the well of water which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away" (Gen. xxi. 25), and after making a covenant with Abimelech, in reply to a question, he says, "For these seven ewe lambs shall thou take of my hand, that they may be witness unto me, that I have digged this well" (Gen. xxi. 30).

It is evening ere Eliezer arrived at his destination, and about the usual time when the women of the country came out to fetch a supply of water. This faithful servant, knowing this, having done all that lay in his power to make his journey successful, then betook himself to solemn prayer. His words are very illustrative of his piety and confidence in God. He said: "O Lord God of my master, Abraham, I pray Thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master, Abraham. Behold, I stand here, by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel

to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink; and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that Thou hast appointed for Thy servant, Isaac; and thereby shall I know that Thou hast showed kindness unto my master" (Gen. xxiv. 12-14).

While these words were yet upon his lips a damsel of singular beauty approached him, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. In fact, it was Rebekah who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, "And she went down to the well and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord; and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. . . . And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring and two bracelets for her hands, of gold. And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee; is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in." She replied, "We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in." To which the servant replied by thanking God for bringing him to the house of his master's brethren. Rebekah made all possible haste back, and soon told the joyful news of this arrival from their distant relatives. Trapp, speaking of this interesting incident, says, "In the city of Haran, at this day, saith one, there is to be seen a well of very clear water, where Rebekah gave drink to Eliezer and his camels; there likewise Rachel, Laban's daughter, first spoke to Jacob. It is called by the townsmen, Abraham's Well." And Matthew Henry quaintly adds, "When he came to seek a wife for his master, he did not go to the play-house or the park,

and pray he might meet one there, but to 'the well of water,' expecting to find one there well employed. . . . What a degenerate age do we live in, in which appear all the instances of pride, luxury, and laziness, the reverse of Rachel's character, whose daughters few are. Those instances of goodness, which were then in honour, are now in contempt."

This readiness of Rebekah to comply with the request of Eliezer, is characteristic of the females of the East even to this day. James Silk Buckingham thus speaks of their general willingness to render this service to travellers: "There was a deep well, at which some damsels of the village watered our horses, and permitted us to drink from their vessels; when, after an exchange of inquiries and benedictions, we pursued our journey." On which Scott remarks: "How are the times changed, since chief persons, and their sons and daughters, cheerfully performed the most laborious service with their own hands? It is to be feared we have but a poor exchange, in our excessive refinements, for the simplicity, diligence, and usefulness which characterised the patriarchs. And, surely, common-sense must allow that these are the most valuable endowments in one who is to fill up the important duties of wife and mother—to be the companion of a wise and pious man's retired hours, and to be intrusted with the management of his domestic concerns, and with forming the tender minds of his children."

We then find that Eliezer came to the house, where he and his camels were supplied with all that they required, down to "water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him." But when meat was set before him, he firmly refused to taste until he had told his errand. Upon being requested to "speak on," he gave a full and clear account of his master's orders, and how that he had, on coming to the well, prayed for prosperity, repeating in substance his prayer, with its remarkable answer. To which only one answer could

be given by Laban, who said, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord, we cannot speak unto thee, good or bad. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go; and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken."

We are then told of the willing yet prompt departure of Rebekah from her father's house, accompanied by her nurse; how that "Isaac came from the way of the well, Lahai-roi, . . . went to meditate in the field at eventide;" they met each other, and "the servant told Isaac all things he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother's tent, and she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

ISAAC also, about ninety years after this, we are told, "dugged again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham. . . . And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of spring-water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water is ours; and he called the name of the well Esek (*contention*), because they strove with him (Gen. xxvi. 18-20); again and again they digged other wells (ver. 21, 22, 25, 32).

It is a remarkable fact that the next instance of a wife being found is also in connection with a *well*. We are told that "JACOB went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked and beheld a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered; and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth." Jacob asks who they are? and while thus talking, Rachel came, and Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock" (Gen. xxix. 1-10). The result was that he ulti-

mately was permitted to marry her; and she bore Joseph, whom we have every reason to believe was the first Nazarite, as we shall now proceed to demonstrate.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### JOSEPH, THE FIRST NAZARITE.



T is admitted that of all the beautiful and pathetic narratives to be found in the Bible, or any other book, the life of Joseph stands first. He was born 1745 B.C. The details of his life, however, are so well known that it is not needful to give them here. The story of the simple-hearted, guileless boy,—the pure and upright youth—the patient sufferer under wrong—the clear-headed, sagacious ruler—the warm-hearted brother—the affectionate son—the man who, amid all his hardships and strange vicissitudes of fortune which befell him, never lost his integrity, or faltered in his allegiance to his God,—these, and many other striking evidences of his goodness, have proved over and over again a charm to the Bible student; and it is interesting to be able to present him, with fairness, as another illustration of the power and value of water-drinking—at anyrate, we submit the evidence upon which we base the claim.

The first Nazarite named in the Bible is Joseph. In Gen. xlix. 26, Jacob says of him, "The blessings of thy father shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separated (*Nezar*, a *Nazarite*) from his brethren." The Douay version follows the Vulgate, "upon the crown of the Nazarite among his brethren." We are aware that there has been a curious discussion among learned men as to the

exact meaning of the Hebrew word *Nezir*, a *Nazarite*, when it is used of Joseph in Gen. xlix. 26; Deut. xxxiii. 16; and by Jeremiah in Lam. iv. 7, 8, when he is mourning over the departed beauty and prosperity of Sion. Some of these think it means, "are separated from others as a *prince*." Jacob appears, however, to have consecrated the first child of his beloved Rachel, and to have set him apart for the special service of the Lord, as Trapp says, "to be a choice and chief man among them;" and again, in Lam. iv. 7, he says, "Some by Nazarites here understand their nobles, and such as wore coronets on their heads—thus Joseph was a Nazarite." Or, as Matthew Henry adds, "In Jacob's blessing that of Joseph's is the largest," and so it is here; and from thence Moses here borrows the title he gives to Joseph (ver. 26), that he "was separated from his brethren." Or, as it might be read, a Nazarite among them, both in regard to his piety, wherein it appears by many instances he excelled them all; and in his dignity in Egypt, where he was both their ruler and benefactor. His brethren separated him from them by making him a slave; but God distinguished him from them by making him a prince. Taking all things into consideration, we may fairly conclude that one who could withstand so firmly the allurements of a queen, and say to her face, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God," would be also equally ready to abstain from those drinks which corrupt the mind and debase the soul.

It is, therefore, no wonder that when Jacob was giving his blessing to his sons, when he came to Joseph, he said he "is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall" (Gen. xlix. 22).

There is just one passage connected with his life upon which it may be well to say a few words. It is said "and they (his brethren) drank, and were merry with him." From this some have inferred that it must

have been intoxicating wine or drink, or it would not have produced such results; and Jonathan, in his Targum, by way of excuse, says it was "because, from the day in which they were separated, they had not drunk wine, neither he nor they, until that day." But why need we try to infer that they were merry, in the modern acceptation of the word? To do so of necessity implies that the pious Joseph made them drunk, a sin which he must have loathed. If, however, we remember the character of the meeting, and the joy it must have imparted to them all, as they talked over what had taken place, now that once more they were all united, we can readily perceive that they would be "merry," because they were then free from anxiety or sorrow of any kind; and we can easily see that such being the case, they would be "merry" in the right way.

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## CHAPTER V.

### AARON, AND THE FIRST TEMPERANCE SPEECH.



It has been wisely said that, in the Bible, God gives us principles which, when the circumstances require it, and the proper time arrives, and men are thus prepared for change, will be sure to overthrow existing wrongs, or put an end to evil systems. In this way, the slave trade, the corn laws, and a host of other evils, have one by one fallen before the application of these wise and Divine laws. It is important at all times to bear this in mind when reading the Bible, for while, no doubt, its main design is to teach men the way of salvation, it, nevertheless, lays down certain leading principles which, if legitimately carried out, are intended to benefit and bless mankind



in many ways. Its truths have the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

Such being the case, we are not surprised to find that, when special circumstances arose for God to make known His disapproval of certain acts of which some of His people had been guilty, He not only sent His judgments down upon the wrong-doers, but distinctly made known His will with regard to the conduct of their successors. It is generally admitted by commentators that the sin of Nadab and Abihu, as described in Lev. x. 1, was committed under the influence of strong drink. It is sad to reflect that thus early in the history of the world men whose special privilege it was to deal with holy things, should so far forget their sacred trust and calling as to "bring upon themselves swift destruction," by erring through wine and strong drink; but so it was, as Rev. J. J. Blunt (in his "Undesigned Coincidences of Scripture") says: "Thus far, at least, it is clear, that a grievous and thoughtless insult is offered to God by two of His priests, for which they are cast off; that without any direct allusion to their case, but still very shortly after it had happened, a law is issued forbidding the priests the use of wine when about to minister. I conclude, therefore, that there was a relation (though it is not asserted) between the specific offence and the general law; the more so because the sin against which that law is directed is just that kind to have produced the rash and inconsiderate act of which Aaron's sons were guilty."

Commenting upon this event, one truly says: "This awful event occurred only eight days after their consecration; and their sin seems to have been occasioned by wine, which was afterwards forbidden to priests, when about to minister in the sanctuary. A punishment so sudden and severe was designed to impress all God's ministers with the immense importance of fidelity in discharging the duties of their office; observing His will in every particular, that He may be glorified. But

had it not also a deeper meaning? May it not be regarded as a standing example of that Divine wrath which shall consume all who pretend to serve God, except with incense kindled from the one altar and offering, by which He for ever perfects them that are sanctified." These are weighty reflections, and worthy the consideration of all who profess to serve the Lord.

Even Gilfillan, who was by no means a friend to the temperance movement, when speaking of the "false fire" of some modern poets, says, in his "Bards of the Bible": "Their fire is in part false fire. The spirit of those unnaturally-excited ages, rendered feverish by luxuries, by stimulants, by uncertainties, by changes, and by raging speculation, has shown sevenfold their native ardour, and rendered its accurate analysis difficult. Whereas, the fire of the Hebrews—a people living on corn, *water, or milk*,—sitting under their vine, but seldom tasting its juice—dwelling alone, and not reckoned among nations—surrounded by customs and manners ancient and unchangeable as the mountains—a fire fed chiefly by the aspects of their scenery, the force of their piety, the influence of their climate, the forms of their worship, and the memories of their past—was a fire entirely natural, and the figures used came forth in quick and impetuous flow."

It is, therefore, not surprising to find that after giving a vivid description of the sin and punishment which fell upon the guilty parties (Lev. x. 1-7) it is added: "And the Lord spake unto AARON, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; *it shall be a statute for ever* throughout your generations; and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean," etc. (Lev. x. 8-11). We place, therefore, AARON among the water-drinkers of the Bible.

It is clear from these words, also, that this command had respect to *all* priests, at *all* periods of their sacred

ministrations down to the end of *all* time. As one observes very thoughtfully, "By this connection is taught that as no external event was to depress with grief the priest, so ought he to apply *no artificial means* to his senses to produce exhilaration; his whole thoughts and attention are to be directed to the sacred offices which are commanded him."

Lange also remarks, that "The connection of this precept with what goes before and what follows seems almost necessarily to imply that it was called forth by some violation of it on the part of Nadab and Abihu. This supposition is made probable by the otherwise unexplained command here given, and thus, indeed, the outward strange fire was only the symbol of the inner strange fire of wine-produced enthusiasm, which so often can mingle itself in pious and animated speeches and poems, by which, indeed, holy and unholy things are confused." Or as Dr. Adam Clarke observes, "This is a strong reason why they should drink no inebriating liquor." By doing this they will be sure to secure that sobriety and condition which is essential at all times, and especially so when in the performance of the duties pertaining to the priestly office. God therefore manifestly regarded the use of such liquor as fraught with great danger to His priests.

Not only was the use of intoxicating drinks thus solemnly forbidden to the priests under the Mosaic law, when engaged in the performance of their sacred duties, but it appears to have been the same among the Egyptian priests. Now, it is surely not saying too much if we venture to remark, that if it was a wise and needful precaution in both these cases, surely a Christian minister who has to minister in holy things ought not to be less holy than a Jewish priest, and so long as he has to put a difference between holy and unholy, clean and unclean, so long will it be equally wise on his part to abide by the Divine instruction to abstain from all *intoxicating drinks*. No harm whatever can ever follow

from the practice of such a wise rule, while the non-practice of it may lead to much moral and spiritual danger, and in this way totally unfit him for the discharge of the sacred and solemn duties of the ministry in many ways.

There is something very suggestive in the teaching which comes down to us in the form of a tradition concerning the first planting of the vine. It is said that Noah beheld Satan busy at the roots, and he asked, "What art thou pouring round the roots, Satan?" To which Satan replied, "I have slaughtered a lion, and I am pouring forth its blood; for the fruit of the vine shall give courage." By-and-by Noah beheld Satan busy again at the roots, and he said unto him, "What art thou doing, Satan?" And he replied, "I have killed a swine, and I am pouring here its blood; for the fruit of the vine shall give impurity." Now, whether we are ready to accept this legend as true or false, of one thing we are quite sure, that such results came about, and continue up to this day, and we therefore need not be surprised at the Divine prohibition to the priests and Nazarites, not to touch anything which cometh from the vine, so that they might be the more ready to distinguish between "holy and unholy, clean and unclean."

No one can deny the fact that the use of intoxicating drink has over and over again proved a snare to even some of the best of men and women. Even in moderation, therefore, it can be truthfully asserted that it is not safe to the physical or moral well-being of those who use it. Bishop Hall sketches a full-length portrait of one whose diet he says "is regulated by health, not by pleasure, as one whose table shall be no altar to his belly, *nor snare to his soul.*" It would work well if this rule was also adopted by all who desire to avoid the snare which has led so many to ruin. Truly does Dr. Miller in his "Nephalism" say with regard to the influence of alcohol on the conscience: "With the trifling exception of a spurious semblance of brotherly

kindness and charity, little raised above maudlin sentimentalism—capricious, fitful, evanescent—the effects on the moral nature are injurious. All that savours of truth and uprightness is specially impaired. In the habitual drunkard and tippler, indeed, the element of truth is almost, or absolutely extinguished—*eaten out by the alcohol*, as colour is eaten out of cloth by acid. The man, in that respect, ultimately may rank as a moral idiot. He may speak the truth accidentally, not otherwise; and he lies with the utmost ease and comfort to himself, being truly insensible to either its sin or shame.”

This command seems to have been of a five-fold character, as will be seen from the following arrangement of its conditions:—

1. It was intended to prevent the priests of Aaron (holy persons) from being injured and polluted by alcohol while engaged in the duties of the tabernacle (holy place).

NEHEMIAH records that when the Levites made a religious confession to God, among other things they said, “Thou Lord gavest them bread from heaven, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst.” “Thou withheldest not manna, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, for forty years didst thou sustain them, so that they lacked nothing” (Gen. ix. 15, 20, 21).

2. It was intended to prevent the commission of such crimes as were likely to proceed from intoxication—*i.e.*, such as presenting strange fire before the Lord.

3. It was intended to prevent any unclean person or thing from being admitted into the tabernacle.

4. It was intended to prevent the priests from teaching anything but that which was ordered in “the statutes spoken unto the children of Israel by the hand of Moses.”

5. It was intended to prevent the manifested purity and glory of God from being tarnished, through any

irreverent or insolent approach to Him, by those priests who were specially consecrated to His service.

May we not ask,—If it was wise thus to abstain while engaged in the most sacred and holy work, is it not also needful to do so when exposed to the ordinary every-day temptations and duties of life ?



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE NAZARITES; OR, THE FIRST TEMPERANCE ORGANISATION.



**A**BOUT 1490 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, we find recorded that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate"—or, as the margin adds, make themselves—"to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the Lord; he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk" (Num. vi. 1-4).

That this was considered binding may be gathered from the following remarkable charge, brought by God against their unfaithfulness, some six hundred years after, as recorded in the Book of Amos ii. 11, 12: "And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not."

It will thus be seen that, as in other cases to which we shall have to refer, when God did interfere with the ordinary habits of the people, as Matthew Henry remarks, "God Himself lays down the law for them, and gives them the rule of their profession," and the command to abstain, not only from wine and strong drink, but also from the produce of the vine, whether it was solid or liquid. By so doing it will be readily seen that every possible barrier would be placed in the way of even the most distant approach to intemperance. If they abstained from the fruit, etc., altogether, they would be sure to be beyond the possibility of danger. As Matthew Henry remarks, "It is observable that, because they were to 'drink no wine' (which was the thing mainly intended), they 'were to eat nothing that came of the vine,' to teach us with the utmost care and caution to avoid sin, and everything that borders on it and leads to it, or may be a temptation to us." Or, as John Trapp adds: "As mirrors of singular sobriety and sanctimony, especially required in such as are separated unto the Gospel of God, and as types of Christ, that great rotary, true Nazarite, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; that holy thing, that holy of holies, or most holy, lest he should drink and forget the law, which he was to study diligently: but loaden bellies make loaden wits; intemperance takes away the heart, overchargeth it." And he adds, on the words "from the kernels even to the husk:" "Nothing that might occasion or tempt him to break his vow. All shadows and shows of art must be shunned, as Bernard hath it; whatsoever looks but ill-favoured (1 Thess. v. 23; Jude 23). He that would not eat the meat must not meddle with the broth. He that would not toll the bell must not tuggle with the rope. He that would shun the blow must keep aloof from the trap."

Professor Moses Stuart, referring to the same subject, also says: "Everything which might have even a tendency to inspire them with a taste for inebriating

liquor was to be most carefully avoided." And Ainsworth adds: "By this prohibition God taught the Nazarites sanctification in mortifying the lusts of the flesh; for the drinking of these endangered men to 'forget the love of God,' to mock, and to rage."

That this wholesome law was productive of good to these people may be gathered from the fact that, nearly one thousand years after the first record of their appearance, we find it stated by Jeremiah, in the Book of Lamentations iv. 7, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire,"—such language evidently implying the great physical advantages which they manifested by abstaining from intoxicating drinks. Every symbol which is employed adds to the perfection of the picture of health. As Dr. Adam Clarke observes: "Milk will most certainly well apply to the whiteness of the skin; the beautiful ruby to the ruddiness of the flesh; and the sapphire, in its clear, transcendent purple, to the veins in a fine complexion." Or, as Trapp adds: "Temperance is the mother of beauty, as luxury is of deformity." While Matthew Henry also remarks: "Drinking no wine nor strong drink, they had a more healthful complexion and cheerful countenance than those that regaled themselves daily with the blood of the grape, as Daniel and his fellows with pulse and water."

It will thus be seen that these Nazarites had suffered no loss in health or morals, so long as they continued in the practice of total abstinence, but, on the contrary, their physical and moral powers were benefited. Not that it is intended to assert that to this alone all such benefits were to be ascribed. But experience in all ages amply confirms this fact, that this practice always *helps* to produce such results, inasmuch as they are generally associated with other judicious habits, which help to promote in many ways the benefit of body and soul alike. It is not saying too



much to affirm, that it would have been well if all ministers of religion had followed such a safe and salutary example. The Church would not have had to mourn so often as it has had to do, the decline and fall of so many of its teachers from prominent places of usefulness,—just as the prophet had to lament the change for the worse which had come over the Nazarites, when they also had been induced to depart from the divinely-appointed method of safety. Can anything be more sad and striking as a contrast than the words of the prophet, when he says (Lam. iv. 8), “Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick”? It is painfully illustrative of the havoc which the change had produced, when, instead of health and beauty, we have presented to us a dark, shrivelled, haggard creature passing along the street, reduced by hunger and thirst to the last extremity of poverty. Alas! in how many other instances has the “gold become dim, and has the fine gold changed,” through that drink which is a mocker, and has so clearly proved itself, times without number, if it has a virtue at all, to be no respecter of persons, leading priest, prophet, and people, alike from virtue to vice, from heaven to hell.

Speaking of the origin of “Nazaritism,” Rev. S. Clarke, in Dr. Smith’s “Dictionary of the Bible,” says, that “it had existed and had become a matter of course amongst the Hebrews before the time of Moses, is beyond a doubt. The legislator appears to have done no more than ordain such regulation for the vow of the Nazarite of Days as brought it under the cognisance of the priest, and into harmony with the general system of religious observance. It has been assumed, not unreasonably, that the consecration of the Nazarite for life was of at least equal antiquity. Ewald seems to think that it was the more ancient of the two. It may not have needed any notice or

modification in the law; and hence, probably, the silence respecting it in the Pentateuch. . . . Ewald supposes that Nazarites for life were very numerous in very early times, and that they multiplied in periods of great political and religious excitement."

Human nature is the same now as it was then. The same physical laws are in operation. What would poison then, will poison now; and whatever had the tendency to lower the moral tone then, has the same influence to-day. Such being the case, we see the wisdom of the command to those whose position called them to the discharge of the highest spiritual duties, that they should be kept as free as possible from all risk of using anything which might in any way mar their character, or injure their moral and spiritual influence. Hence the command to abstain from wine and strong drink was as wise as it was safe; for as Dr. Miller says in "Nephalism," when speaking of the influence of alcohol on the spiritual condition, "The tendency of the drug taken unnecessarily, is continually and decidedly to counteract and deaden the movements of the spiritual nature, both as regards the man's own personal condition, and the outgoings of that upon others, *more or less*, as has been often said, according to the amount taken, and the susceptibility of the individual." He then cites two cases, one of which testifies that "*I am sure* my bodily health is better; I believe my mind to be fully as vigorous, and I have far more confidence now in the *source* from which my spiritual light is derived, than I had when I was taking my two glasses of sherry, or the same number of tumblers of Bass's bitter beer."

In like manner Dr. Channing, after having given up his wine, declared that a cloud had passed away from his soul. And Dr. Pye Smith, while dealing with the question of the free use of such drinks in more general terms, makes this most expressive statement, "The person becomes unsusceptible of pure religious feelings,

and is awfully liable to spurious religion—the religion of self-flattery, the religion of exaltation, of imagined privileges, while moral obligations are little regarded—the religion whose spiritual character is spiritual pride and vain-glorious confidence. This pretended religion—the most virulent of moral poisons—the most deceptive to its own victims, and the most contagious to other persons—is well known to the faithful minister as the hydra evil which occasions the greatest difficulties, and the most distressing trials in all his course of duty. Close investigation will often discover a surprising connection between these delusions of the soul and the indulgence *very moderately* in spirituous beverages and narcotic poisons.”

Intoxicating drinks, even where they do not actually ruin, often hinder the Christian in his pilgrimage. As John Bunyan, speaking of another snare, says, so we may of this:—

“Then I saw in my dream that a little off the road over against the silver mine, stood Demas, gentleman-like, to call passengers to come and see; who said to Christian and his fellow, ‘Ho! turn aside hither and I will show you a thing.’

“*Chr.*—What thing so deserving as to turn us out of the way to see it?

“*Demas.*—Here is a silver mine, and some digging in it for treasure; if you will come, with a little pains you may richly provide for yourselves.

“*Hope.*—Then said Hopeful, Let us go see.

“*Chr.*—Not I, said Christian; I have heard of this place before now, and how many have there been slain; and besides, that treasure is a snare to those that seek it, for it hindereth them on their pilgrimage.

“Then Christian called to Demas, saying, ‘Is not the place dangerous? Hath it not hindered many in their pilgrimage?’

“*Demas.*—Not very dangerous, except to those that are careless. But withal he blushed as he spake.”

In a chapter on "Company" in the third book of "The Holy State," quaint old Fuller makes the following striking and beautiful allusion to this vow of the Nazarites. He says: "A desert is better than a debauched companion. For the wildness of the place is but uncheerful, whilst the wildness of bad persons is also infectious. Better, therefore, ride alone than have a thief's company. And such is a wicked man, who will rob thee of precious time, if he doth no more mischief. The Nazarites, who might drink no wine, were also forbidden (Num. vi. 3) to eat grapes, whereof wine is made. *We must not only avoid sinne itself, but also the causes and occasions thereof*; amongst which bad company (the lime-twigs of the devil) is the chiefest, especially to catch those natures which, like the good-fellow planet Mercurie, are most swayed by others."

Even Dr. Cumming (who was no friend to the temperance movement) when commenting on this subject in his "Sabbath Morning Readings," says, "The word Nazarite is derived from the Hebrew word, which means "to separate;" and, therefore, it denoted a person separated and excluded from society, to a certain extent, and devoted, under special laws, restrictions, and limits, to the service of God. The Nazarite was prohibited drinking wine, lest the least taste for that which he had renounced might be revived; he was not allowed even to taste the juice of the grape, or to eat moist grapes or dried, lest he should retain the least taste for that which he had abjured, and which it was a high offence, after his voluntary dedication to God, in the least degree, to participate of."

Olshausen, in commenting upon "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 17, 18), says it "refers to *all* modes of gratifying one's own lusts, because it invests the flesh with the government, and brings the mind into a servile relation. Instead of seeking strength in the Holy

Spirit, man, in his blindness, has recourse to the physical (unholy) spirit—*i.e.*, to wine and strong drinks; therefore, according to the point of view of the law, the Old Testament, in the institution of the Nazarenes, *recommends abstinence from wine and strong drinks*, in order to preserve the soul free from all merely physico-spiritual influences, and by that means to make it more susceptible to the operations of the Holy Spirit."

This is, after all, but another method of putting the matter, like the old rabbis said to the Nazarite—"Oh! Nazarite, go about, go about, and do not pass through a vineyard." In like manner, it will be wise for each Christian to "go about," and not enter needlessly into temptation, by using any kind of intoxicating drinks.

This was also recognised by Rev. John Brown in his "Self-interpreting Bible," published in 1812, where he says: "In these Nazarites let ministers, let saints, separated to the service of God, learn to deny themselves, mortify the deeds of the body, renounce this world, and the pleasures of sin or sense, and behave as solemnly consecrated to God alone. Let every breach of their vows, through fellowship with dead and unfruitful works of darkness, occasion repeated application to Jesus' purifying blood, and to more diligence in duty. And, after finishing their course, let them thank God for His gracious assistance, account themselves unprofitable servants, and trust only to Jesus' all-sufficient sacrifice of Himself, as the ground of their hope and joy."

This was a statute for the priests "for ever," "throughout their generations," and was in force when Christ came. May we not ask—*Are the moral reasons on which this prohibition was founded any less urgent now?* If not, then why should not all ministers at once willingly comply with its demands.

Not only were Nazarites required to be water-drinkers, but the Levite who dedicated himself to a life

service in God's house became subject to this law for ever. Hence it follows that the high-priest, the priest and the Levites, when ministering in their ordinary course, had to abstain from wine and strong drink. In many cases, this must have amounted to an almost constant and entire practice, from the character of the duties they had to discharge (Deut. xviii. 6, 7; 1 Chron. ix. 22, 23; 2 Kings xi. 4-6). If, therefore, such drinks were considered by God as unfitted for the ancient priesthood, during the spiritual duties they were called upon to discharge, by a very natural process of reasoning, we must also come to the conclusion, that the same thing should follow in these days; and, therefore, it is best and wisest for all ministers to copy such a salutary practice.

The practical conclusions to which this Divine interference points are these:—

1. That it is dangerous even for ministers to use such drinks, or God Himself would not have so absolutely prohibited their use.
2. That even ministers are liable to fall and become victims, if they continue to use such drinks.
3. That total abstinence from such drinks is safer and wiser.
4. That ministers are better able to discharge their sacred duties by abstaining from such drinks.
5. It is needful to abstain from such drinks in order to be fully prepared to discern between things unclean and clean, and to teach the statutes of the Lord aright. Those, therefore, who do not thus abstain cannot be as clear in their judgment, or as correct in their teachings, or such a prohibition as this would not have been made by God.

Referring to the great danger which always accompanies even the so-called "moderate" use of such drinks, Dr. Miller also significantly asks, "Is it safe to use, in any degree, that which, while it depresses and deteriorates the moral element, intensifies the animal, and

weakens, more or less, the power of self-control? Is it right, at the bidding of appetite, or in subjection to prejudice and custom, to use, as a luxury, that which renders the user more of a mere animal, and less of a man?"

6. That which is so needful and safe for the minister, must be equally beneficial to his flock, and it would be wise for all to follow such an example.

7. The reasons for this Divine prohibition being moral and physical, they are equally of importance at the present time, and will be productive of the same blessings wherever and by whoever they may be adopted.

In Ezekiel's prophetic (Christian) temple it is said, "Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court" (Ezek. xlv. 21). It was, therefore, considered a means to a great moral end. Even Josephus admits this when he says, "Moses enjoined the priests not only to observe purity in their sacred administrations, but in their daily conduct, that it may be unblameable also; and, on this account it is, that those who wear the sacerdotal robe are without spot, and concerning all things are pure and abstinent, being forbidden to drink wine so long as they are wearing this robe (see Ezek. xlv. 17-19). Practically, it teaches this, that "While you are My special servants, wearing My livery, you must do My work on this abstinent plan, or perish; there is no other means of absolute safety and purity."

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## CHAPTER VII.

## MOSES, THE FIRST WATER-DRINKING LAW-GIVER.



MOSES, or, as his name implies, *drawn out of water*, must certainly hold a place among the Water-drinkers of the Bible. His mother name was Jochebed, and his father's Amram. His life is divided into three equal parts of forty years each,—forty years in the court of Pharaoh, forty years an exile in Arabia, and forty years at the head of the hosts of Israel, amid their tedious march through the wilderness to the land of promise.

Of the first forty years of the life of Moses, the Bible gives but a brief account. Just before his birth, Pharaoh had issued an edict that all male Hebrew children should be slain. The mother of Moses, after hiding him for three months, put him into a little boat of rushes, and hid him among the weeds of the Nile. As the fond mother placed her babe in the tenderly-constructed ark of bulrushes, she, no doubt, felt a pang of sorrow in her heart that, perhaps after all, her efforts to save her beloved child must fail. Exposed to the waters, and the crocodiles of the Nile, she felt that it was only a question of a short time, and all her expectations would be blighted, yet, with a true mother's heart, she would not quite despair until compelled to see that all her hopes were completely shattered. No; she must place Miriam, his sister, who is supposed to have been about ten or twelve years of age, to watch and see what might happen. She might well say—

“The flags and sea-weeds will a while sustain  
 Their precious load; but it must sink ere long!  
 Sweet babe, farewell! yet think not I will leave thee.  
 No; I will watch thee, till the greedy waves  
 Devour thy little bark.”



Just at that crisis, we are told that the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe, and saw him. Struck with his beauty, she felt interested in him. His sister Miriam asked the question with, no doubt, a beating heart, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" And Pharaoh's daughter answered, "Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother." This was enough. God had heard the prayers of this anxious family, and ere many moments elapsed the fond mother again clasped her child to her bosom. What must have been her joy when she heard from the mouth of Pharaoh's daughter the royal mandate, "Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses; and she said, Because I drew him out of the water." How the days of his boyhood and early manhood were spent must be inferred from the statement made, that "he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and mighty in word and deed;" and, no doubt, during the period of his education, he made himself familiar with the sufferings and wrongs which were being endured by his fellow-countrymen. Acting under the impulse of the moment, he slew an Egyptian task-master rather than see a wrong done to one of his own race, and for that act he had to flee, and for forty years was completely hid from the eyes of his countrymen.

As one well says of him at this time of his history, "Go, chosen of God! thou art not yet fully educated for thy high and holy calling. Thou must be taught self-control and submission. Onward to the wilderness! Humble thyself here. Thou must know more of thy God; thou must know more of thyself. The solitude of a wilderness has been the school of many a glorious preparation for illustrious work. Thine is all to come.

Away! commune with rocks, count the sands, listen to the still small voice of solitary nature. Away! thou shalt not be all alone, yet almost alone—keep cattle; guard them from the wild beasts of the desert, seek out for them pasture, and water, and shelter. Thou shalt have a home in the desert, and a companion, and children, all thy nature, individual, social, shall be cultivated; thou hast made thy choice, and must pay the penalty. Yet fear not, Moses! thy forty years of life in the land of Midian shall prepare thee for forty years to follow, of a life the most illustrious and immortal in the annals of manhood.”\*

From the splendour and luxury of the royal court of Pharaoh, he passes into the obscurity of a country farm life, there to learn how to govern himself that he may be the better qualified to govern others. “And Moses dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so soon to-day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hands of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man; and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter (Exodus ii. 16-21). It will thus be seen that it was in connection with a well of water that the second important step in his life was accompanied, inasmuch as it led to his settlement in that country, and to his taking unto him Zipporah, one of the seven daughters who met him at the well, to be his wife.

During the forty years he thus dwelt in the solitude

\* Dr. A. M. Brown, “Evenings with the Prophets.”

of his country, Moses witnessed some remarkable events. One day, while keeping the flocks of Jethro his father-in-law, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in the bush which burned with fire and yet was not consumed. There and then he was appointed to go and deliver Israel, and to tell them that "I AM THAT I AM" had sent him for that purpose. Unwilling at first to accept such a serious charge, he at length consented, and after working many wondrous miracles before Pharaoh, such as the turning of the waters of Egypt in their streams, rivers, ponds, and pools into blood, until the people were unable to drink, he instituted the Passover with *unleavened* bread, by the express command of God, to celebrate the slaying of the first-born of the Egyptians, and the passing over of the houses of Israelites wherever the lintels of the doors were found sprinkled with the blood of the slain lamb. At length Pharaoh consented to let the 600,000 children of Israel go, but infatuated with the idea that he could yet subdue them, he followed them to the borders of the Red Sea which divided, and "the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." But immediately Pharaoh and his army arrived in the midst of the sea after them, the waters came upon them and covered them, so that they were utterly overthrown.

Josephus, in his "History," states that this passage of the children of Israel was accomplished in a frightful storm of rain, thunder, and lightning. That this appears to be true may be gathered from the seventy-seventh Psalm, where it says, "The waters saw Thee, O God; the waters saw Thee and were afraid; the depths also were troubled; the clouds also poured out water; the air thundered; Thine arrows went abroad; the voice of Thy thunder was heard round about; the lightnings shone; the earth was moved and shook." No wonder as the children of Israel looked awe-struck

on the wild waste of waters on the following morning, and saw the broken chariots and arms, together with the corpses as they were cast up with every heaving billow on the shore, they must have felt that they were in the hands of One mighty to deliver and to protect.

"And when the children of Israel came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters, for they were bitter, and they murmured, saying to Moses, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when he cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet" (Exodus xv. 23-25). After making them certain promises upon certain conditions we are told, "They came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water; and they encamped there by the waters" (Exod. xv. 27). Again at Rephidim we find (Exod. xvii. 1, 3), there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water to drink—and the people thirsted for water—and asked, "Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our cattle with thirst?"

Moses cried to the Lord and said, "What shall I do unto this people? they be ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel" (Exod. xvii. 4-6).

In the course of events we find Moses charged with the important work of a legislator. As his father-in-law saw him sitting "from morning until evening," judging the people, he told him that he would certainly "wear himself away" under such a heavy burden, and advised him to share the responsibility with another.

According to one of the laws of Moses, we also find

another undesigned, and, therefore, an important illustration of the value he placed upon water. He orders that any who happened to be guilty of manslaughter, through taking away the life of a person by accident, and had thereby exposed themselves to the vengeance of the kinsman of the deceased, were to be allowed to escape, provided they could enter one of the cities of refuge. Every facility for flight was ordered to be ready. "The way was to be prepared" (Deut. xix. 3). Among other things of a very suggestive character, we are informed, that such cities were ordered to be—(1.) Easy of access; (2.) the roads were to be wide, level, dry, and plain; (3.) to be kept smooth, and in good condition; (4.) no stumbling-blocks or hindrances allowed to be in the way; (5.) kept well supplied with *water* and other provisions; at every division of the road a direction-post, with the word REFUGE inscribed in plain characters, so that those who ran might read (see Hab. ii. 2). These provisions furnish proof, remarks Kitto, "of the superior wisdom and benignant spirit of the Jewish laws," even to the present day (Exod. xxi. 13; Num. xxxv. 9-34; Deut. xix. 1-13).

When we remember that forty years of his life was spent in the wilderness, and notice the sagacity with which he acted, and the manner in which he stamped the impress of his own intellect upon the people, and recollect that he was after all but a man of like passions as ourselves, we feel that a strange interest of necessity gathers round his history. At one time we find him climbing the rocky steep to the desert plain above, at another he bursts through the mountain gorge and stands again on the shores of the Red Sea, and then we find him quietly listening to the cases brought before him for decision, and now and then rebuking the murmurs of the discontented ones with whom he has so much to do. We are then led with him to the *heights of Sinai*, where he holds communion with God,

and receives the ten commandments, but when he descended the mountain with the tables of stone in his hand, how can we judge of his astonishment and anger as he witnessed the wild revel and shameless idolatry into which the people have fallen. No wonder in hot wrath he cast the tables down, and felt their case was hopeless. To forget so quickly their sudden emancipation from bondage, their miraculous deliverance in the Red Sea, the water from the rock, and all the other instances of God's protecting care! Was it at all surprising that with a voice of thunder he cried, "Whoever is on the Lord's side, let him come to me," and that the people felt they must take sides with him!

How he pleaded time after time for the lives of the people to be saved. How he bore with their murmurs and complainings, we have not space to tell. How he at last had to transfer his leadership to Joshua, and mount the rugged sides of Nebo to get one look at the land for which he had worked so hard, and sighed so often. How he was permitted from its lofty heights to behold the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob for an inheritance, and which ere long the mighty host was soon to enter under the guidance of another leader. All was now near to its close with him, and with eyes undimmed and natural force unabated, he at length lays himself down to die. "And God buried him," and "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." True, he did not enter Canaan, but he entered a far better land, where he was led to fountains of living waters, and God Himself wiped the last tear from his eyes. He lived for others, and not for himself. He never thought of rest here, but he has it there; and it seems, after all, that a life of such self-denial and sacrifice, should end as it had been lived—in a sacrifice for others, that it might all the more reflect its beauty and lustre upon us. "The perfection of Moses, taken as a whole," says Dr. M. Brown, "stands forth all but unrivalled amongst mortals. Simple in his habits, pure

in his morals, untainted by earthly ambition, masterly in his management of men, fired by an unquenchable patriotism, shrinking from no amount of fatigue to serve his countrymen, abused, hated, maligned, yet firm in the pursuit of freedom and mercy, with a heart entirely given to his God, still spent in outgoings of love to men; never, till our Saviour came, had the earth seen such a character." Speaking of the Bards of the Bible, Gilfillan says of Moses, "We never can separate his genius from his character—so meek, yet stern; from his appearance—so gravely commanding, so spiritually severe; from his law—'girt with thunder and embroidered fires;' and from certain incidents in his history—his figure in the ark—when, at the sight of the strange, richly-attired lady, 'Behold! the babe wept;' his attitude beside the bush that burned in the wilderness; his sudden entrance into the presence of Pharaoh; his lifting up, with the sinewy, swarthy hand, the rod over the Red Sea; his ascent up the black precipices of Sinai; his death on Pisgah, with the promised land in view; his mystic burial in the secret vale by the hand of the Eternal; his position as leader of the great exodus of the tribes; and the founder of a strict, complicated, and magnificent polity—all this has given a supplemental and extraordinary interest to the writings of Moses."

For forty years he led the Israelites in the wilderness as a water drinker, and at the age of 120 he was as vigorous and healthful as he could be. Ever ready to lead, he always seemed waiting to bless them, but, like all other great reformers, Moses had to stand alone. Indeed, as Gilfillan remarks, "He was the loneliest of men: lonely in his flight from Egypt; lonely while herding his flock in the wilderness; lonely while climbing Mount Sinai; lonely on the summit, and lonely when descending the sides of the hill; lonely in his death, and lonely in his burial. Even while mingling with *the multitudes* of Israel, he remained secluded and

alone. As the glory which shone on his face insulated him for a time from men, so did all his life his majestic nature. Stern incarnation of the anger of Omnipotence, thy congenial companions were not Aaron, nor Joshua, nor Zipporah, but the rocks and caves of Horeb, the fiery pillar, the bush burning, the visible glory of the sanctuary, the lightning wreaths round Sinai's sullen brow, and all other bright or terrible symbols of Jehovah's presence! With such, like a fire mingling with its kindred upon one funeral pile, didst thou gloomily embrace and hold still communion. Shade of power not yet perished; sole lord of millions still, wielding the two tables as the sceptre of thy extant sovereignty, with thy face flashing back the splendours of the Divine Eye, and seeming to descend evermore thy "Thunder—hill of Fear,"—it is with a feeling of awful reverence that we bid thee farewell."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ISRAELITES, AND THEIR FORTY YEARS' EXPERIENCE.



WHEN the children of Israel left the land of Egypt on that memorable night, and started on the journey to the wilderness, they entered most unmistakably on a life of total abstinence from strong drink; and it is a significant fact that there is no charge among all the sins of which they were guilty during their forty years of wilderness life, that they were ever guilty in any way of drunkenness, or even of lusting after wine or strong drink. It is distinctly said of them at the conclusion of the campaign, "Ye have not drunk wine or strong drink, that ye might know that I am the Lord your God" (Deut. xxix. 6). This



very plainly indicates that they had suffered no loss by their mode of life, so far as total abstinence was concerned, and that had they used such strong drinks, they would in all probability have forgotten God.

The Egyptian life of these myriads of men, women, and children, was therefore clearly that of Water drinkers. Nor does it appear that during that time they even craved after intoxicating drinks, so completely were they satisfied with the drink God had provided for them; though they remembered clearly the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic, and asked plaintively for flesh to eat (Num. xi. 4-6). Concerning their drink, they appear to have been perfectly satisfied, and for this simple reason, there is nothing better to supply the real wants of the body when thirsty than water, and when we remember that at least three parts out of four of the body consists of water, the explanation for its continued supply becomes plain. People may seek to make it more palatable, or try to improve its colour, but it is absolutely impossible to improve it, and if men, women, and children would only take it when nature calls for it, and for the purpose for which it was sent, they would know and feel its virtues in a far greater measure than they do. At any rate, here is the fact that for *forty years* a God of infinite love and wisdom, gave His children the very best liquid that heaven could produce, and that they suffered no deterioration in physical stamina, may be gathered from the fact, that from that generation was produced the most valiant and courageous sons of Abraham, the world has ever seen.

1. It thus appears that when God assumed the kingship over His people, He enforced entire abstinence upon them.

2. That during the whole time of Israel's chastisement for her national sins, they had to live as Water-drinkers.

3. That their health in no way suffered by such a *course of life*.

For forty years God directed these children of Israel, amounting to 600,000 adults, besides children, and yet we do not read of a single instance where He even offered to supply them with wine. It would have been just as easy for Him to have provided wine and strong drink, as to have provided water and manna, the production of the one was as easy, it can be readily conceived, as the other—if it had been either needful or good for them to have it, but God evidently considered that there was nothing better for *over a million* of travellers in a desert under a vertical sun than water. Nor do we read that during this forty years' pilgrimage a single complaint was made. At the end of the forty years' travel of the Israelites in the wilderness, we find Moses addressing them on many topics, and among others he reviews some of their journeys, and tells them that the Lord said, "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough; turn northward. And command the people, saying, Ye shall buy meat for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall buy water of them for money that ye may drink. For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; He knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness these forty years, the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing" (Deut. ii. 3-7). Could anything be more emphatic—*lacked nothing*—by the entire absence of wine and strong drink. This can only be accounted for on the grounds that they had been total abstainers; for it is now, as it was then, the nature of all kinds of intoxicating liquors to create an appetite for themselves wherever they are used, while abstinence has the tendency to destroy the appetite.

It thus is clearly taught that when God chastised the children of Israel by making them dwell in the wilderness for forty years, they had to live as Water-drinkers and in this way illustrate how unnecessary all such drinks must be, in any shape or form, to help in the

discharge of the duties of life, or contribute to the health and strength of either man, woman, or child.

In their journeyings we find many striking illustrations of water-drinking. We have already seen the Divine command to abstain from wine and strong drink which was given to the Nazarites. We also notice that when Moses is rehearsing the story of what befell Israel on their way to Canaan, he says, "And the Lord spake unto me, saying, . . . Ye shall buy meat of them (the children of Esau) for money that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink" (Deut. ii. 6). And again he says, "I sent messengers unto Sihon King of Heshbon, saying, Give me water for money that I may drink." When "there was no water for the congregation" in Kadesh, and they murmured, "the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts to drink: And Moses took the rod and gathered all the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly; and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."

And once again when the people spake against God and against Moses, saying, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water" (Num. xxi. 5), the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and many died, because of their rebellion.

On passing through Edom he sends a message to the king, saying among other things, "neither will we drink of the water of the wells," and offered if he did so "if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will

pay for it" (Num. xx. 17). And again, when he went to "Beer; that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, gather the people together, and I will give them water." Then Israel sang this song, "The princes digged the well, the nobles digged it, by the direction of the law giver" (Num. xxi. 16-18). When passing through the land of the Ammonites, again it is said, "Let me pass through, we will not drink of the waters of the well."

And Balaam in prophesying the happiness of Israel, said, "He shall pour the waters out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters" (Num. xxiv. 7).

A very striking illustration of the value God sets upon water may be gathered from the following incident connected with the refusal of the Ammonites and Moabites to comply with the request of Moses. Among their crimes and punishment was this, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to the tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever; because they met you not with bread and water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt" (Deut. xxiii. 3, 4). It is supposed to be a cutting off for ever (see Neh. xiii. 1) by most commentators. This is in striking contrast to the conduct of God, who by Moses, in reviewing His dealings with the children of Israel, says, "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of the valleys and hills. . . . Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness where there was drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint" (Deut. viii. 7). "The land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven" (Deut. xi. 11).

Commenting upon this refusal of the Moabites to sell water to the Israelites, Trapp says: "As God takes notice of the least courtesy showed to His people, even to a cup of cold water, to requite it, so He doth of the

least discourtesy, even to a frown or a frump, to revenge it." And Matthew Henry, with equal force, says: "It was bad enough that they did not, as allies, or at least, as neutral states, bring victuals into their camp, which they should have been duly paid for. It is well God's Israel did not need their kindness, God Himself following them with bread and water. . . . Note, God will certainly reckon, not only with those that oppose His people, *but with those that do not help and further them, when it is in the power of their hand to do it.* The charge at the great day is for an omission,—'I was hungry and ye gave me no meat.'"

Such being the case, may we not safely conclude that it is imperative to adopt every means in our power to remove the evil of intemperance, and if it can be done best by water-drinking, then it becomes a duty to do so, especially when it can be done with safety and advantage by all. We learn the following lessons, we think, from these incidents:—

1. That if God, for forty years, did not supply the Children of Israel with either wine or strong drink, He therefore teaches us that they are not needful.

2. That it may be concluded, therefore, that no such drinks can equal water as a beverage.

3. That water is conducive to the good of man, and more favourable to his moral and spiritual welfare.

4. It is wise to use water as a beverage, and unwise to substitute intoxicating liquors in its place.

5. It is perfectly safe to become and remain water-drinkers, both at home and abroad.

6. Water-drinking is not such a novelty as some imagine.

7. It is perfectly practicable for men, women, and children to follow the example of these water-drinkers; as Matthew Henry remarks, "They lived upon manna and rock water, yet they were men of strength and courage, mighty men, and able to go forth to war." So may we also become by the same means.

## CHAPTER IX.

## JOSHUA, THE WATER-DRINKING WARRIOR.



**J**OSHUA, the son of Nun, was born in Egypt, 1537 B.C., and became the companion and attendant of Moses during the forty years' pilgrimage in the wilderness, and therefore ought also to be included among the water-drinkers of the Bible; he received the name of Jehoshua, or Joshua, Jehovah the Saviour. Because of his faithfulness and courage when sent along with Caleb, as a spy, to take a survey of the land of Canaan, it was promised that he and his associate alone should enter the promised land.

It may be very reasonably asked: Why did God direct Moses to define a system of diet for the children of Israel; and, indeed, we may add, fix so carefully all the details of their outward physical life? Why did God put His people on a strict regimen? No doubt it was to raise their standard of health and strength, so that they might be able to cope with the strong warriors of Palestine. By observing these Divine instructions, or, in other words, obeying God's wise physical laws, Joshua was supplied with as fine a race of warriors as ever a general led to the battle-field.

Moses seems to have selected Joshua as a sort of secretary, because of some inherent power he recognised in him, for we read nothing of his infancy, nor, indeed, of anything, until he has to go with the troops to meet the wild hordes of Amalek. Moses said to Joshua soon after the passage of the Red Sea, "Choose us out men to go and fight with Amalek." He is thus permitted to pick his own soldiers, plan the battle, and make the attack in his own way.

When the mob shouted, "Stone him, stone him," he rose at once, above the fear of man, a tower of strength, and stood unmoved—though but a youth at the time—amid the panic; a revolt which had for the moment seized upon the mass of the people, when they heard the false report of the others. When it is said of him, "He was not afraid or dismayed," the Bible clearly testifies to his dauntless courage and bravery.

When Moses was about to die, Joshua was appointed to fill his place, God promising to be with him as He had been with Moses, only he was told to "Be thou strong and very courageous." It was not easy work to enter walled cities, climb mountain fastnesses, and meet strong armies. But—

"The voice that from Thy glory came,  
To tell how Moses died unseen,  
Was now to waken Joshua's spear of flame  
To victory on the mountains green."

The first place he resolved to take was Jericho,—a place very famous in Bible history; if he could take *that*, the road to the interior was open. It was also the chief city of Canaan, strong in its walls and gates. The Jordan lay between it and him. Its streams were swollen, no bridge crossed the rushing flood; but God said, Joshua shall roll back the flood, and it was so, when the priests touched the waters, suddenly they began to pile up, and the people went through. As Joshua, like a wise general, was walking amid the valley below Jericho, he was startled by the appearance of one like a giant of the place. He paused, and then, with a voice which plainly told that it came from one who was prepared to take his stand, he said, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" Let this be settled, and then I am ready for action. Would that the same kind of attitude towards the "adversary," strong drink, had ever been shown by the Lord's people. The reply was very assuring, "As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." The result was that instruc-

tions were given how to besiege the city,—they were to march round the city seven times, and then, when the blast of the trumpet sounded, the walls were to fall,—and it was so; and they entered the place and slaughtered the people, except Rahab and her family.

Joshua then moves on, from place to place, and obtains victory after victory, to only one of which we can refer,—the battle which took place by the “waters of Merom.” Josephus says there were 300,000 armed footmen, 10,000 cavalry, and 20,000 chariots, in all 330,000. No details are given, but he “came upon them by the waters of Merom, suddenly, and fell upon them,” and the whole plain was covered with chariots and horses, left behind in the flight, which were soon set on fire. He at length conquered the country, divided it among the people, established a commonwealth, and then, having assembled his “elders, judges, officers, and heads” together, told them that, “not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord my God hath promised;” and they swore to “obey and serve the Lord God.”

We are told that he died at one hundred and ten years of age, and they “buried him in Mount Ephraim, among his tribe.” Jews and Gentiles both claim him,—each alike testifying to his power and influence; and no wonder, as we think of his bravery, his unswerving integrity, single-heartedness, and piety; all alike point to the loftiness of his character and the greatness of his purpose, which led him to say to them, near the close of his life, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Like the Saviour, whose name he bore, “Joshua was the Jesus of the Jewish nation, just as Jesus is the Joshua of the world.”

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## CHAPTER X.

## CALEB, THE WATER-DRINKING SPY.



WHEN Caleb was forty years old (Josh. xiv. 7), it appears that, in company with Joshua and others, he was appointed to go to spy out the character of the land of Canaan. He must, therefore, have been a *life abstainer* up to that time, as we have seen that water was the only beverage God had provided for the people during their wanderings in the wilderness. He, with Joshua, brought a true report, and, as a reward for their faithfulness, they were the only two who were allowed to enter the promised land. Forty-five years after, when the land was being divided among the tribes, we find him saying, "Forty years old was I when Moses, the servant of the Lord, sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espie out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in mine heart. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's, for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord my God. And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me. As my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out and to come in" (Josh. xiv. 7-11).

Joshua, it appears, gave him, as requested, Kirjath-arba, or, Hebron, and its neighbourhood, for his possession, as a recognition of his faithfulness, and also blessed

him. He was also one of the twelve whom God chose to divide the land. "Some think," says Trapp, "that Caleb afterwards yielded up Hebron to the Levites, and the rest of the tribes did the like, as glad of their company, by whom they might learn the ways of holiness that lead to happiness." If this conjecture be true, it is evident that he continued to walk in the ways of Moses and Joshua; and likewise realised how true it is that God continued faithful to him to the end of his journey—in other words, his piety met with its reward.

After the death of Joshua, Caleb appears as saying: "He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife. And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing, for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper and nether springs" (Judges i. 14, 15; Josh. xv. 18, 19). On which Matthew Henry says: "She asks only for the water, without which the ground she had would be of little use either for tillage or pasture; but she means the field in which the springs of water were: the modesty and reasonableness of her request gave it a great advantage. Earth without water would be like a tree without sap, or the body of an animal without blood. Therefore, when God gathered the waters into one place, He wisely and graciously left some in every place, that the earth might be enriched for the service of man" (see Ps. civ. 16, &c.).

If this is correct, then those who despise water cannot understand how dependent they are upon it for their daily food, as well as for its purifying and health-preserving influences.



## CHAPTER XI.

## Jael, the Rechabite.



ISERA was a general in command of the mighty army of the Canaanitish King Jabin. This is the only instance in those early times of armies being commanded by other than kings in person, and it is supposed that in this case it was owing to the fact that Sisera was eminent as a general for his ability and success (Judges iv. 2-22). It came to pass, however, that in his war with Barak he was defeated, and fled away to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite—a race who are generally admitted to form part of the Rechabites. We are then told: "Some think," says Dr. Gill, "he did not ask for wine, because he knew the Kenites did not drink any, and so, of course, kept none in the tents; but though this was the custom of the Rechabites, who were the same as the Kenites, yet it is very probable the custom had not obtained among them, since it was enjoined by Jonadab their father, who lived in the time of Jehu" (2 Kings x. 15). With all due deference to Dr. Gill, we think it is probable that they did. Having done this, we are then told that "Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him" (Judges iv. 18, 19). While he slept, she drove a nail through his temple, and he died. Deborah, in singing the song of victory, among other things, says: "Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

They that are delivered from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water," &c., clearly intimating that it was a blessing for which they should be thankful. As Trapp says: "The tankard-bearers that erst could not draw water, but with hazard to their lives or liberties, are now freed of that fear."



## CHAPTER XII.

GIDEON, THE MIGHTY MAN OF VALOUR.



SOME 1256 years before the birth of Christ, Gideon, then a young man, might have been seen in a secluded spot among the hills of Manasseh, shut in by rocks on every side. He was busy threshing out a bundle of wheat in an out-of-the-way corner, so as to escape the notice of the enemy who everywhere lay gathered around the country.

Raising his eyes for just a moment from his work he noticed a stranger—a man with a staff in his hand—quietly seated under the spreading boughs of the only tree which grew near. Ere he had time to say a word or move a step, a voice said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (Judges vi. 12). He was startled. What did it mean? He asks for an explanation. "If Jehovah be with us, why then is all this evil befallen upon us," etc. Here is the evidence of a man mindful of the welfare of his country, and desirous of its redemption, and ready to help to bring it about. Hence we read: "And Jehovah looked upon him and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" Having received once a Divine commission, he felt he had no choice but to "go," and this assurance that the

strength for the discharge of the duty should be given, seems never to have forsaken him, amid all his anxieties when facing the strongest foe.

What a change in such a short time. An hour ago he was a farmer's son, doing his duty. Now he is the commissioned deliverer of Israel from the Midianites. It is almost impossible to believe it. He is amazed that he, an unknown young man, living in a poor, out-of-the-way place, should be selected. No wonder he exclaims, "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." In these words he manifested all the qualities of a great mind and a large heart. Like Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and other mighty men, he hesitated, not because he wished to shirk the work or evade the responsibility, but because he felt unequal to the task. Just the very opposite to those of whom one has said—

"How ready is the man to go,  
Whom God had never sent;  
How timorous, diffident, and slow,  
God's chosen instrument."

His seeming reluctance, however, is now overcome by the assurance, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man." That was enough; and although he might not have fully understood at the time all such words involved, yet events fully confirmed all that was promised. All he then wanted was some token that he was not mistaken. He, therefore, asks, "If now I have found grace in Thy sight, then show me a sign that Thou talkest with me;" and begs him to remain until he had time to prepare a meal for him. This was soon done, and "Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto Him under the oak, and presented it." *The stranger*, however, did not partake of the pro-

visions, but told Gideon to spread it out upon the rock, and to pour the broth over it; "and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight." No wonder "Gideon perceived that he was an angel of the Lord." Again, he is somewhat terrified, and cries, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face;" but is soon able to calm his fears when he hears the voice of the Lord say unto him, "Peace be unto thee; thou shalt not die." That is enough; and he at once starts on his mission.

His first efforts were directed to have reform, although he knew his life would be endangered by the attempt. "He feared his father's household, and the men of the city." In the course of the evening, however, he made his secret known to some of his father's servants, and succeeded in getting ten of them to help him; and the result was that, ere the dawn, the altar and shrine to Baal was demolished. When this was discovered, the crowd who gathered said, "Bring out thy son, that he may die." But the father's good sense averted the danger, and soon an altar to God was erected in its place. Then, says the history, "the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him." He entered upon a wider sphere of action; and again he asks for a sign. He would take a fleece of wool, and lay it all night on the threshing-floor, open to the breeze; "and if the dew be on the floor only, and if it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as Thou hast said." And the next night he asked for it to be reversed, and in both cases his request was granted—the first morning he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water, and the next it was dry. He is satisfied with having betaken himself to prayer and prevailed, and he goes on his way assured of victory.

One of the most memorable days in the history of the children of Israel was when thirty-two thousand of them

flocked to the standard of Gideon—"that mighty man of valour." His first movement was to advance his army to a position "beside the well," or "spring," of Harod. He had scarcely done this ere he received a new and startling intimation, that, although his army was miserably equipped and poorly fed, and far outnumbered by that of the enemy, yet the Lord said unto Gideon, "The people that are with thee are too many" (Judges vii. 2). Other reasons were also assigned; the majority of the men were not in a prepared state to receive a victory, others were cowards at heart; and these would be the first to claim the honour, in the event of a victory being secured. The trumpet, therefore sounded, but not to swell the number, but to hear it proclaimed, "Whoever is fearful and afraid let him depart early from mount Gilead." Such was the effect of this startling announcement that twenty-two thousand withdrew to their homes. On which Dr. Adam Clarke remarks: "If the best-appointed armies of Europe had the same address from their generals, *bonâ fide*, as these Israelites had, at least an equal proportion would return home." It is not those who boast the loudest, who are the most to be relied upon in the day of conflict. What must have been the feelings of Gideon as he saw the hurry and rush of these craven-hearted ones to get away can readily be imagined. Ten thousand, however, yet remained after the sifting process had been tried. Again the Divine message came: "The people are yet too many; bring them down to the water, and I will try them for thee there." The ten thousand troops were then moved to the pool of Harod. Arriving there, the vast majority went down on their knees, and, putting their faces to the water, sucked it up, in a long, satisfying draught; while a few—only three hundred, as it appears—remained on their feet, and took up the water by handfuls, lapping it hastily out of their hand with their tongue. Such was to be the test. The three hundred who lapped with the tongue, and these only,

were to go with Gideon against the immense host whose tents and camels covered all the plain, while the rest of the ten thousand were to return, "every man to his place" in the encampment, and wait till after the victory had been achieved by the three hundred, so that they might be ready to pursue and destroy the rest of the enemy. But the Lord said, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand."

It may be interesting to ask, "Wherein did the great strength of these three hundred chosen ones differ from their comrades, and from what was it derived?" To this various answers have been given. Josephus says that Gideon was "to esteem those that bent down on their knees, and so drank, to be men of courage, but for all those that drank tumultuously, that he should esteem them to do it out of fear, and in dread of their enemies." This, however, can hardly be conceived as consistent with what had already happened; on the contrary, we are inclined to believe that Longfellow in the preface to his "Poems" has hit upon the right idea when he says, "It is not those who bow down on their knees to drink of the streams that water life, but those who take sparingly, as from the palm of the hand, who are destined to overcome and overthrow." Yes, we may easily imagine a multitude of men flinging themselves down at the water's brink in order to imbibe a long and hearty draught as representative of those who are more or less self-indulged; while the three hundred who, without laying down their weapons, or putting themselves for a moment off their guard, would be content to take a hasty draught from the palm of their hand, would be more likely to represent the men of unusual energy and greater power of self-restraint. Men who would be ready even when the urgent call of thirst in the heat of the day should somewhat divert them for the moment, would be ready to forego their own wants at such a critical crisis, rather than run the risk of meeting



with a defeat, or in the slightest manner delay the moment of victory over their enemies. Yes, it was on such material Gideon could rely with confidence. Here he had some tokens of coming self-control, as Trapp well says:—

“This was a sign of strength of body and temperance of mind, as the other was of weakness and greediness. Those are fit to follow the Lord, saith Diodat here, who for zeal to his service do but taste the pleasures of the world as they pass along, without staying for them, only for necessity, and not for any constant delight they take in them. He which, with some of the Polomans, or with that dog Diogenes, lappeth water out of his hands, may nevertheless go forwards, as an Egyptian dog doth when he lappeth the water of Nilus in fear of the crocodile.”

In the dead of the night the three hundred chosen men arose, and each man carried under his left arm an earthen jar or pitcher, such as was used for drawing water, in which was placed a “torch.” In his right hand each man carried a trumpet. In an instant, by an appointed signal, the jars were dashed to pieces, the torches were sent blazing in the air, and a thrilling war cry was heard “For Jehovah and Gideon.” The Midianites awoke in terror, took to flight in a panic, and slew each other, and so fearful was the slaughter that before Gideon and his men could overtake them a hundred and twenty thousand out of a hundred and thirty thousand had fallen. Ultimately the victory was so complete that “Midian was subdued, so that they lifted up their heads no more.” For forty years Gideon lived in quietness among his people, died in a good old age, and was at length gathered to his fathers, and buried in the sepulchre of Joash, his father, in Ophrah.

There are a few lessons arising from the very interesting events connected with the life of Gideon.

1. That God has accomplished mighty reforms by *very unlikely* means, and from very humble origins.

2. That the first step to national reform is to begin at home.

3. That a few men with God on their side are stronger than a multitude without God.

4. That we should be ready to do the work to which God in His providence calls us.

5. That we should seek by prayer Divine guidance and strength.

6. That we should be ready to follow what is right, and to oppose what is wrong, wherever we may find it.

7. That we should expect to succeed in that which has God's blessing.

8. That we should be ready to combine human means with Divine power. "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."



### CHAPTER XIII.

#### MANOAH, THE GIANT'S MOTHER.



ABOUT 1100 before the birth of Jesus Christ we find it stated that the children of Israel, owing to their evil ways, had been delivered by God into the hands of the Philistines forty years. But it came to pass that "there was a certain man of Zorah of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah, and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not; but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing. For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his beard; for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb, and he shall begin

to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges xiii. 2-5).

She was overjoyed with the news, and went at once and told her husband what had been promised, and how she was to act. "Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again to us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born" (ver. 8). "When I see the strength of Manoah's faith," says Bishop Hall, "I marvel not that he had a Samson to his son; he saw not the messenger, he heard not the errand, he examined not the circumstances; yet now he takes thought, not whether he should have a son, but how he shall order the son which he must have; and sues to God, not for the son which as yet he had not, but for the direction of governing him when he should be. Zacharias had the same message, and, craving a sign, lost that voice wherewith he craved it. Manoah seeks no sign for the promise, but counsel for himself; and yet that angel spake to Zacharias himself, this only to the wife of Manoah; that in the temple like a glorious spirit, this in the house or field, like some prophet or traveller; that to a priest, this to a woman. All good men have not equal measure of faith; the bodies of men have not more differences of stature than these graces. Credulity to men is faulty and dangerous, but, in matters of God, is the greatest virtue of a Christian. Happy are they that have not seen, yet believed. True faith takes all for granted, yea, for performed, which is once promised.

"He that before sent His angel unasked will much more send him again upon entreaty; those heavenly messengers are ready, both to obey their Maker, and to relieve his children. Never any man prayed for direction in his duties to God, and was repulsed; rather will God send an angel from heaven to instruct us, than our good desires shall be frustrated."

When the angel re-appeared, he did not present him-

self to Manoah, but to his wife. She immediately hastened to fetch her husband, and hearing from her own lips that it was the same remarkable visitor, he at once expressed a desire to see and hear for himself. When he was assured by the angel that he was the same that had already spoken to his wife, he said, "Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do to him? And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah, Of all that I have said unto the woman let her beware. She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe" (Judges xiii. 12-14).

Would that every parent was equally concerned "how to order their child," and "how to do unto him." It would lead to the adoption of the best modes of eating and drinking before its birth, in order that no latent seeds of intemperance might be transmitted, and to the proper training of the child, when born, to avoid all drinks which were known to possess the power to intoxicate, and thus lead to danger and ruin.

Says Matthew Henry when commenting on these words, "How shall we order the child?" "There is need of a great deal of caution and observation for the right ordering both of ourselves, and of our children. Beware and observe, take heed not only of *drinking wine or strong drink, but of eating anything that cometh of the vine.* Those that would preserve themselves pure must keep at a distance from that which borders upon sin, or leads to it. When she was with child of a Nazarite, she must not eat any unclean thing; so those in whom Christ is formed, must carefully cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and do nothing to the prejudice of the new man."

That there was no mistake in this command may be gathered from the fact that Manoah's wife repeated the exact words to her husband which the angel had told her; and when the angel appeared the second time, he

again repeated the injunction, adding to it so as to make the matter beyond the reach of danger—"she may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine." Precisely the same as the command given to Moses in Num. vi. 1-3 when giving the law of the Nazarites 340 years before.

"The injunction respecting her own abstinence was no arbitrary requirement, but was founded on nature and reason. The temper of the mind is materially affected by the state of the body, and both may concur in communicating permanent impressions from the mother to her offspring, which often affect the comfort of existence,"\* or as Matthew Henry truly remarks, "Women with child ought conscientiously to avoid whatever they have reason to think will be in any way prejudicial to the health or good constitution of the fruit of their body. And perhaps Samson's mother was to refrain from wine and strong drink, not only because he was designed for a Nazarite, but because he was designed for a man of strength, which his mother's temperance would contribute to."

It must be evident from these Divine instructions so repeatedly given, that they were based upon Divine wisdom, and therefore in harmony with Divine law. All experience amply confirms the righteousness of these arrangements. Physical power and natural vigour, is in no way dependent upon intoxicating liquors either in the case of fathers, mothers, or children. That which is calculated to produce degeneracy in the one will also do so in the other. To guard against even the very possibility of this taking place, it was, and is still, wise to act upon this Divine plan. If we wish our children to be free from any predisposition to use these drinks which tend to corruption, drunkenness, and vice, let us refrain from even the bare possibility of transmitting a liking or a craving for them, inasmuch as experience amply testifies, that such a taste may be handed down

\* Dr. Cox's "Female Scripture Biography."

from generation to generation by the law of hereditary transmission.

Even among the ancients this great truth was in some way discovered. Recognising as they did the vast importance of physical strength as a necessity for maintaining their positions by means of war, they oftentimes rigidly legislated against the use of wine. Julius Cæsar tells us of a people called the Nervii, who dwelt at Belgic Gaul—a brave and warlike people—and “they suffered no wine, nor other things that contribute to luxury, to be imported; because they were of opinion, that by such things their spirits were enervated, and their courage impaired” (B. G. 11, 15). This wise plan has over and over again been confirmed; and if we desire to hand down to our posterity a vigorous body, a clear mind, and a patriotic spirit, we cannot do better than to follow their example, and if we do so, we shall be sure to reap the same results, inasmuch as whether men and women are guided by the Word of God or not, His works clearly teach that His physical laws are as Divine in their operation as are His spiritual ones.

There are a few important lessons which the consideration of this interesting narrative suggests, and which may help to direct us also in the way we should go:—

1. We should seek to avoid hasty judgments. Manoah's wife presents a favourable contrast to her husband in this respect. She did not allow herself to be discouraged by not giving time for reflection, and reviewing the circumstances of the case. Too much eagerness to escape a danger, or to possess a good, is apt at times to lead to disappointment, while a careful and deliberate weighing of the evidence which may be within our reach will be productive of the greatest good.

2. We should be ready to avow our convictions on all proper occasions. Manoah had every reason to be thankful for the distinct and prompt avowal which his

wife made of her sentiments, though they were opposed to his own. In like manner those who abstain from intoxicating drink should be always ready, when called upon, to candidly avow their convictions without regard to the sneers or even scoffs of those who may oppose. When truth demands that we should speak, it is disgraceful, if not criminal, to be silent.

3. We should be prompt to do all that we conceive to be right. It is an old adage that "the path of duty is the path of safety." It is equally true, that in the brave discharge of a known duty, God ever sustains those who trust in Him. Timidity is weakness; courage is strength.

4. Women should be ready to abandon the notion that intoxicating drinks are needful to nursing mothers, inasmuch as science and experience has abundantly confirmed the wisdom of this Divine injunction to Manoah's wife. The Creator's knowledge of woman's needs must be accurate, and the evidence furnished in this and in other cases abundantly proves the correctness of His decision.

5. We should be willing to recognise the fearful risk women run of transmitting a craving for such drinks to their offspring, and of the possibility of serious results. Says Sir A. Carlisle, "I doubt much whether the future moral habits, the temper, and intellectual propensities, are not greatly influenced by the early effects of fermented liquors upon the brain and sensorial organs."

6. We learn that we are personally responsible for using the best means in our power to hand down a pure mind and a sound body to our offspring. This injunction laid upon Samson's mother clearly implies that she had the power to affect her child for good or for evil in this respect; and for this she was, therefore, clearly responsible. Had she disobeyed, and used intoxicating drinks, injury must have resulted to her babe, and she would have incurred grave guilt upon *herself*; but by abstaining she handed down a blessing.

7. It is our duty to do all we can to secure the end God has in view, and to use the best means in our power. True, God might have dispensed with these in the case of Samson, but He did not; and as He invariably works by natural means, when Divine interference is not absolutely needful, so He expects us to obey His commands. As Matthew Henry observes: "Perhaps Samson's mother was to refrain from wine and strong drink, not only because he was designed for a Nazarite, but because he was designed for a man of great strength, which his mother's temperance would contribute to."

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### SAMSON, THE WATER-DRINKING HERCULES.



HERE is no Judge in Israel," says Kitto, "whose history is so fully related as Samson's. It occupies four of the twenty-one chapters which compose the book of Judges. It is full of striking and marvellous incidents, arising from the great physical strength and the great moral weakness of the hero, mixed up with a prevailing and child-like trust in the Lord, in which lies all of greatness that belongs to his character."\* And when speaking of the command to abstain from wine and strong drink, he adds: "Although Samson was obviously made a Nazarite to indicate his being specially set apart to serve the Lord, by the endowment bestowed upon him, yet there was a peculiar fitness in the vow being imposed upon one who was to be so gifted with the utmost perfection of physical strength. His bushy locks were a sign and symbol of his extraordinary strength, inasmuch as men possess

\* "Daily Bible Illustrations."



them more abundantly than women, and strong men more abundantly than weak. Wine and strong drink also impair the strength and clearness of the intellect. The retention of the hair, therefore, and the abstinence from vinous drinks, expressed the highest perfection of body and mind—the full possession of all his powers and capacities in the individual.”

We read that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him on one occasion mightily (Judges xiv. 5, 6): “And, behold, a young lion roared against him. . . . And he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand.” After a time, he incurred the wrath of the Philistines, because he caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned tail to tail, and let them go into the standing corn, and burned up the shocks. And when the Philistines burnt his wife and her father with fire, he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter. After this, three thousand men of Judah bound him, and delivered him into the hands of the Philistines, when again the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and, breaking the cords that bound him, with a new jaw-bone he slew a thousand of them. After which “he was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant; and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? But God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and *there came water thereout*; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he revived” (Judges xv. 18, 19).

We then read of his exploits at Gaza; how he “took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.” Matthew Henry, referring to his wonderful strength and courage, says: “Samson drank no wine, and yet he excelled in strength and courage, and everything that was bold and brave; for he had *the Spirit of God* moving him: therefore be not drunk

with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, who will come to those who are sober and temperate.'

It is thus clear that total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors does not unfit any one for severe manual labour. So strong was Samson that, to use Milton's words, it was he

"Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid,  
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,  
And, weaponless himself, made arms ridiculous."

In Homer's "Iliad," Hecuba is represented as saying to her son Hector that "to a weary man wine imparts strength;" but the hero was wiser than his anxious mother on that subject, for he replies, "Bring me not, honoured mother, the wine, sweet as honey to the soul, lest thou weaken my limbs, and I should be forgetful of both strength and courage" ("Iliad," Book VI., v. 265, 266); and Alexander Pope gives us an interesting note on these lines:—"This maxim of Hector's concerning wine has a great deal of truth in it. It is a vulgar mistake to imagine the use of wine either rouses the spirit or increases strength. The best physicians agree with Homer on this point, whatever modern soldiers may object to this old heroic regimen. We may take notice that Samson as well as Hector was a water-drinker; for he was a Nazarite by vow, and as such was forbid the use of wine, to which Milton alludes in his 'Samson Agonistes.'" Pope then proceeds to quote Samson's reply to the Chorus, from Milton's noble drama. Speaking to himself, Samson says,—

"Abstemious I grew up, and thrived amain."

The Chorus speaks:—

"Desire of wine, and all delicious drinks,  
Which many a famous warrior overturns,  
Thou couldst repress; nor did the dancing ruby,  
Sparkling, outpoured, the flavour or the smell,  
Or taste that cheers the heart of God and men,  
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream."

To which Samson replies :—

“ Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed  
Against the Eastern ray, translucent, pure,  
With touch ethereal of heaven's fiery red,  
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying  
Thirst, and refreshed ; nor envied them the grape,  
Whose heads that turbulent liquid fills with fumes.”

The Chorus then responds :—

“ O madness ! to think use of strongest wines  
And strongest drinks our chief support in health,  
When God, with these forbidden, made choice to rear  
His mighty champion, strong above compare,  
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.”

Notwithstanding this marvellous physical strength with which Samson was endowed, he appears from time to time to have been a man also of strong animal tendencies, and instead of doing as St. Paul, “ keeping under the body and bringing it into subjection,” he went “ after the sight of his eyes, and lust of his heart ” (Eccles. xi. 9), both very ill guides ; and ultimately being betrayed by Delilah into the hands of the Philistines, they “ took him and put out his eyes.” “ These eyes of his were the first offenders that betrayed him to lust,” says Trapp, and now they are first pulled out, and he is led a blind captive to Gaza, where he was first captivated to his lust. He was bound with fetters, and made to work the prison mill. But in his affliction he prayed to God to restore his strength, and his prayer was answered, although his enemies knew it not. On a certain day a great festival was held at which the lords of “ the Philistines were gathered together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice ; for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him enter the spacious theatre, whose mighty roof rested on two pillars, they praised their god.” And it came to pass when their hearts “ were merry,” no doubt stimulated by indulgence in strong drink, as the expression implies, or as Milton, by the mouth of the messenger, says :—

“The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice  
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,  
When to their sports they turned,”

to which the semi-chorus adds that they were—

“Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,”

in a moment, while Samson made sport, he took hold of the two pillars, and bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. A sad end for such a noble specimen of humanity to come to, but teaching us how needful it is to be on the watch against the sin that so easily besets us.

That Samson was satisfied that God's plan was right, and his own conduct alone, that was to blame for the ruin which befell him, has been well portrayed by Milton when he says:—

“Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me  
But justly ; I myself have brought them on ;  
Sole author, I, sole cause ; if aught seem vile,  
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned  
The mystery of God, given me under pledge  
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,  
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.  
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,  
But warned by oft experience. Did not she  
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal  
The secret wrested from me in her height  
Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight  
To them who had corrupted her, my spies  
And rivals ? In this other was there found  
More faith, who also in her prime of love,  
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,  
Though offered only, by the scent conceived  
Her spurious firstborn, treason against me ?  
Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs  
And amorous reproaches, to win from me  
My capital secret ; in what part my strength  
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know ;  
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport  
Her importunity, each time perceiving

How openly and with what impudence  
 She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse  
 Than undissembled hate) with what contempt  
 She sought to make me traitor to myself ;  
 Yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,  
 With blandished parlies, feminine assaults,  
 Tongue-batteries, she surceased not, day nor night,  
 To storm me, overwatched, and wearied out,  
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,  
 I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,  
 Who, with a grain of manhood, well-resolved,  
 Might easily have shook off all her snares ;  
 But foul effeminaey held me yoked  
 Her bond-slave. O indignity, O blot  
 To honour and religion ! Servile mind  
 Rewarded well with servile punishment !  
 The base degree to which I now am fallen,  
 These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base  
 As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
 Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
 True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,  
 That saw not how degenerately I served."

This interesting and remarkable man's life suggests some important lessons.

1. That when God raises up a deliverer or a fore-runner He selects sober men. Of these Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist are striking examples. To be given to drink implies weakness, and naturally it disqualifies such men from taking a prominent part in any great social, political, or religious reformation. The inspiration which is derived from the spirit which intoxicates and that which cometh from God, cannot work together. Of Samson we are told, "and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times." Would that of all our young men it could be also said that their inspiration was from the Almighty, instead of from the "wine which is a mocker, and the strong drink which is raging."

2. We cannot help coming to the conclusion that this divinely imparted strength of Samson's is in a very striking manner an illustration of the Divine approval of temperance principles. If the strongest man that

ever lived was by Divine command reared as an abstainer, surely there is presumptive evidence that men ought to be able to do the hardest work without the aid of intoxicating drinks now. It is certain that such a plan does not weaken the human body, but that the fullest bodily vigour can be obtained and maintained with no drink but pure water. If we would emulate—

“The invincible Samson, far renowned  
The dread of Israel’s foe,”

then like him, we must keep out of the body all those drinks, which science and experience teach neither impart strength, nor in any way help to develop the powers of the human body. If it was needless for Samson, it cannot be needful for us.

3. One event in Samson’s life may also teach us the important lesson of *not despising simple means*. It has pleased God over and over again to accomplish great wonders by small and insignificant means. The simple Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The reading of a tract has set in motion good influences, which has resulted in the conversion of numbers of souls. The signing of the temperance pledge for the sake of others, has over and over again proved a blessing to those who thought they were exercising much self-denial in doing so. So of the jaw-bone of an ass, as Quarles truly says:—

“The jaw-bone of an ass ! How poor a thing  
God makes His powerful instrument to bring  
Some honour to His name, and to advance  
His greater glory ! . . .  
Where Heaven doth please to ruin, human wit  
Must fail, and deeper policy must submit.  
There wisdom must be fooled, and strength of brain  
Must work against itself, or work in vain.  
The track that seems most likely often leads  
To death ; and where security most pleads,  
There dangers in their fairest shapes appear,  
And give us not so great a help, as fear.  
The things we least suspect are often they  
That most effect our ruin, and betray.

Who would have thought the silly Asse's Bone,  
 Not worth the spurning, should have overthrown  
 So stout a Band? Heav'n oftentimes thinks best  
 To overcome the greatest with the least.  
 He gains most glory in the things that are most slight,  
 And wins in honour, what they want in might."



## CHAPTER XV.

### RUTH, THE FAITHFUL DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.



THE story of Ruth has a charm about it, which never seem to be likely to be lost. The incidents are so sweet, the affection so touching, and the faithfulness so true, that it always lays hold upon the heart. Driven by famine, we are told that a certain man named Elimelech, with his wife and two sons went to live in the country of Moab. Soon after he died, leaving his widow and her two sons. They both took wives. Ere long the two sons also die, leaving the three widows. Having heard that the famine had ceased, Naomi, the mother-in-law, stated that she had resolved to return to her own land, but she was met with such strong proofs of affection from Ruth, that at length she consented for her to accompany her. In due time they reached Bethlehem, and all the city was moved to see them, and it was harvest time. Naomi had a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth, and he told Ruth to go and glean in his field, and when Boaz found who she was, he gave orders among other things: "When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn, . . . and at meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in vinegar" (Ruth ii. 8, 9, 14). The Vulgate version gives, "and

drink the waters from which also the youths drink." Implying that this wealthy farmer supplied his reapers with water, and found no doubt, as many are doing at these times, that harvest work is performed with greater ease, as well as with more satisfaction to all around, than where the practice of giving beer, ale, or cider prevails.

Quaint Thomas Fuller commenting on the words, "Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab; for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread," says, "by 'bread' is meant all that sustenance necessary for the maintaining of our lives, whereof bread is the chiefest. As the temple of Dagon principally leaned on two pillars, and fell to the ground when Samson took them away; so the building of our bodies chiefly rely on bread and water for outward sustenance, which being taken away (they) cannot but presently decay. Let others, therefore, wish those dishes which curiosity hath invented, rather to increase than satisfy hunger (or thirst we might add) which are more delightsome to the eye than pleasing to the palate, yet more pleasing to the palate than wholesome to the stomach; let us pray 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Bread is a dish in every course; without this can be no feast, with this can be no famine."

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## SAMUEL, THE WATER-DRINKING SAGE.



HERE are great diversities of character among the water-drinkers of the Bible, and this is the more valuable, inasmuch as it helps to illustrate that amid such varieties, the value of the great fact remains the same—that in no way does total abstinence from intoxicating drinks detract from either mental, moral, or spiritual power, or from true and exalted greatness. This can be well proved from the life of Samuel—the last of the Judges and the first of the Prophets. Most of the others are unknown to us in the early days, but Samuel is brought before us as a little child in whose dawning life we seem to have the promise of his future greatness and goodness. Yea, our interest is excited in him before his birth, by the striking and peculiar events with which its announcement is made known. We learn also how possible it is sometimes, for even good people to be mistaken in their opinion of other persons' actions. This was especially the case with Eli, the venerable priest, while sitting upon a seat by the post of the temple, when he rashly came to the conclusion, that Hannah was in a state of intoxication. It appears that either from a want of charity, or a defect in his eyesight, he pronounced an opinion, before he had taken the trouble to inquire whether it was correct or not, and ere he reflected he asked with some impatience, "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee." But he was labouring under a mistake for "Hannah spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard," and she was able to give him an answer which at once removed his

suspicious when she replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have neither drank wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before God. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial; for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto" (1 Sam. i. 9-17). Hannah therefore belongs to the Water-drinkers of the Bible.

Nothing, indeed, could be more complete than this respectful, dignified, and earnest denial of the sin he had laid to her charge. Indeed, we may to this day say, that wherever any woman can use the same language, she will be equally able to free herself from the slightest suspicion, of being under the influence of drink. To be able to rebut the charge of being excited with drink successfully, it is needful to say, "I have not taken any, and therefore it is impossible."

"His father," says Dr. Gill, "was a Levite, therefore Samuel must have been devoted to God at the age of twenty-five or thirty till fifty (See Num. viii. 24-26), but here the vow devotes Samuel from his infancy and all his days."

There appears to be no doubt that the father and mother had thus agreed together upon this matter, and hence she felt at liberty to pray, "O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid but wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head" (1 Sam. i. 11). His very childhood was thus to become sacred by his being devoted to the service of God as a Nazarite from his birth. And when Eli understood the nature of her request he replied, "Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him." She then went her way and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

It is gratifying to find that Samuel, "the greatest of

kings and prophets," as Philo calls him, "never drank wine or strong drink during his life. He was to all intents and purposes a life water-drinker." And it is a remarkable fact, says Rev. S. Clarke, M.A., in his article on Nazarites in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," that in all the cases of Nazarites for life mentioned in the Bible—viz., Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist, the vow was made by the parents before the birth of the Nazarite himself. We do not know whether the vow for life was ever voluntarily taken. According to the general law of vows (Num. xxx. 8) the mother could not take the vow without the father, and this is expressly applied to the Nazarite vow in the Mishna. Hannah must, therefore, either have presumed on her husband's concurrence, or secured it beforehand.

That this act of total abstinence on the part of the Nazarites was not dishonour, or in any way calculated to limit their usefulness, may be gathered from the following remarks made by Rev. S. Clarke, in his article on Nazarites, in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." He there says: "The consecration of the Nazarites bore a striking resemblance to that of the high-priest (Lev. xxii. 10-12). . . . And Maimonides (More Nevochim iii. 48) speaks of the dignity of the Nazarite, in regard to his sanctity, as being equal to that of the high-priest. . . . Perhaps it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the half-sacerdotal character of Samuel might have been connected with his prerogative as a Nazarite. Many of the fathers designate him as a priest, although St. Jerome, on the obvious ground of his descent, denies that he had any sacerdotal rank."

There seems to be a special strength, a special blessing, above all, a special power of swaying the souls of others for their good, which is imparted to wise and voluntary abstinence. The hand of invisible consecration overshadows, the fire of a spiritual unction crowns the head, of him who in early youth has learnt to say

with his whole heart, "In strong warfare, in holy self-denial, I dedicate my youth to God." And such we want; we want them among you, the youth of England; and in proportion as we get them, will England sink or rise. . . . We do not want those whom they call the gilded youth,—the fluttering butterflies of the season,—the dandies and the gossipers, the pleasure-seekers, who make their lives deservedly wretched, because they make them deliberately base.

No sooner was Samuel "weaned" than she brought him to Eli. Never was there an earlier or more remarkable dedication to God than this. Hannah "lent her son to the Lord for ever," when there was no open vision, owing to the wickedness of the people. One night, about 1141 years before Christ, Samuel had fallen asleep. As he slept a voice called him, "Samuel! and he said, Here am I." He arose, and went at once to Eli, thinking he had called him. It was not so. But "Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him." A second and third time this call was repeated, until Eli concluded it was the Lord who called, and he told Samuel that if the voice spake again he must answer, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." The voice did awake him again, and he did as instructed by Eli, and heard a revelation which astounded him as well as Eli.

How Samuel stood forth as a prophet of Israel; how he gathered them together by the waters of Mizpah; how, in an evil hour, when his own strength had failed him, he was induced to appoint his two sons, Joel and Abiah, to be Judges with him, and sons unlike their sire they proved to be; how he anointed Saul; how he anointed David; how, when he gave them his wonderful farewell address, the thunder and rain bore witness to his authority, so that "all the people feared the Lord and Samuel;" how he retires to Ramah, and betook himself to labour in the school of the prophets, where the Nazarites and others were instructed and trained;

how, in his ninety-seventh or ninety-eighth year, he died, with other events, are all clearly recorded in the Bible.

Devoted to God from his birth, early dedicated to the service of God, he hallowed, by his example, not only those with whom he had to do, but his influence has come down to the present time. Firm as a rock he stood amid the corrupt times without a stain. He lived for God; as one says: "It were hard to determine which was happiest, his life or death. He lived to the noblest purposes—the glory of God, and the good of his country; and he died full of years and honours, universally lamented. Such was Samuel. Such always were, and such always will be, in a good measure, all those whose beginnings are laid in true religion, whose duty is their delight, and whose God is their glory."

Among the many valuable lessons which the life of Samuel suggests, we may name the following:—

1. That we should not jump to conclusions, without first examining the grounds upon which our opinions are based.

2. That it is possible for even the best of people to form wrong opinions, for want of proper information.

3. That, if we wish to be free from the charge of intemperance, we should be ready to say, like Hannah, I have neither drank wine or strong drink.

4. That it is wise to set an example of total abstinence to our children, and to dedicate them to God from their earliest days.

5. That total abstinence from intoxicating liquor is consistent with devout piety, and great wisdom.

6. That total abstinence in no way hinders usefulness to man, or brings dishonour to God.

7. That the life of Samuel teaches that God approves of life-long total abstinence, and, therefore, it has His Divine blessing attending it.



## CHAPTER XVII.

## DAVID, THE WATER-DRINKING KING.



IT appears that King David, and also his courageous soldiers were Water-drinkers. We find that, on one occasion, when he wanted food and drink for their use, he sent a deputation to Nabal, saying: "Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants," etc. To which Nabal replied, "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?" (1 Sam. xxv. 8-11). The result was that David resolved to take what he wanted by force, but was fortunately prevented by the tact of Abigail, the wife of Nabal, who, when she heard of what was likely to take place, and while her husband was getting drunk, made haste and took with her bread, wine, raisins, etc., and went to meet David by the way. The result was that she, on the death of her husband, became queen of Israel.

Another incidental reference occurs in the life of King Saul. Wearied with the day's work in seeking for David with three thousand men, he lays down to rest. "And David arose and came to the place where Saul lay," and when Abishai asked permission to slay him, David forbade him, but told him to "take then now the spear that is at his bolster and *the cruse of water*, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster" (1 Sam. xxvi. 11, 12). This was precisely the same thing that Elijah found when he awoke under the juniper tree, "Behold, there

was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head," or, as the margin puts it, "bolster."

Again, on another occasion, we find that when Absalom was conspiring to overthrow his father's kingdom, that it was told David: "Nevertheless, a lad saw them and told Absalom; but they went both of them quickly and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had *a well* in his court, whither they went down. And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known. Here, again, we see another incidental reference to the importance of water—a well, but no wine-cellar. By-and-by, we are told, that when David came to Mahanaim, the people brought beds, basins, wheat, barley, honey, butter, sheep, cheese, etc., "for the people that were with him to eat; for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness."

Again, when fighting the Philistines, we are told: "And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate. And three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well, and took it and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it" (2 Sam. xxiii. 15, 16).

This is a very significant illustration of self-denial, and is commended to the careful consideration of those who, with the advantages and blessings of the full light of the Christian dispensation, are apt to ask, "Why should I give up my glass of this or that because some abuse it?"—or, to speak more correctly, they should say, "because it abuses them."

On another occasion, "They found an Egyptian in *the field* and brought him to David, and gave him

bread and he did eat; and they made him drink water. . . . For he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights" (1 Sam. xxx. 11, 12).

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ELIJAH, THE PROPHET OF FIRE.



IN the person of Elijah we are introduced, says Dean Stanley, to "The greatest and most romantic character Israel ever produced." He is, however, introduced to us in the Bible "without any mention of father, mother, or the beginning of his days—as if he had dropped down out of that cloudy chariot which, after his work was done on earth, conveyed him back to heaven," or, as Bishop Hall quaintly remarks, "He cometh in with a tempest, who went out with a whirlwind." Some commentators suppose he was a Nazarite like John the Baptist, as there is so much in him in harmony with his character and work.

The very first sentence that he utters is a direful denunciation against that wicked king, Ahab, in which he says, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain these years" (*i.e.*, three and a-half years, Luke iv. 23; James v. 17), but according to my word (1 Kings xvii. 1).

It is, however, reasonable to suppose that, before delivering this fearful message, he must have warned this most wicked king of the fatal consequences which would be sure to follow to himself and his people from the vile lives they were living. He then disappears, and we are told, "And the Word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thou eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before



Jordan. And it shall come to pass, that thou shalt drink of the brook" ("Adam's ale he had," as John Trapp well says); "and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did accordingly unto the word of the Lord; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that is beyond Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; *and he drank of the brook*" (1 Kings xvii. 3-6). This is a very plain proof that he may be included without any difficulty among the Water-drinkers of the Bible, especially if we remember that he remained about one year in that secluded spot, and was in this way supplied with food and drink by the direct agency of the Almighty. As one quaintly yet truthfully remarks: "God gives order for competency not for wantonness; not out of the dainty compositions in Jezebel's kitchen, nor out of the pleasant wines in her cellar, would God provide for Elijah; but the ravens shall bring him plain and homely victuals, and the river shall afford him drink; if we have wherewith to sustain nature, though not to pamper it, we owe thanks to the giver. Ill doth it become a servant of the Highest to be a slave of his palate."

We are then told, "And it came to pass after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath which belongeth to Zidon and dwell there; behold I have commanded a widow to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold the widow woman was there gathering of sticks; and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, *a little water*, in a vessel that I may drink," &c. (ver. 8, etc.). For two years and a-half he remains a guest of the poor widow, waiting patiently further instructions from God what to do. Meantime, the famine waxes more serious, the widow's child dies and *is raised again to life through the prayers of the prophet.*

At length the Divine mandate is given for him to return to Israel, and he goes only to find Ahab still unchanged, and Jezebel his wife as mad as ever after her idols.

Not wanting unnecessarily to expose himself to danger, he first consults good Obadiah, who had secretly hid a hundred prophets of the Lord in a cave, and fed them with bread and water (1 Kings xviii. 4-13). Through Obadiah a message was sent to the king that Elijah had returned, which so aroused Ahab that he started himself to inquire when rain might be expected, and charge Elijah with troubling Israel. This charge, however, was soon repelled by Ahab being plainly told that it was his own sin of idolatry which had produced such terrible results among his people, and challenging Ahab to summon his priests on Mount Carmel to settle the whole matter. To this Ahab consented, and as a result the priests and people were commanded to sacrifice to their god, Baal, and in due time all things were made ready. Elijah also summoned all the elders of Israel, but they did not attend, so Elijah entered upon the contest practically alone with the 450 priests of Baal. Having constructed an altar with twelve stones, Elijah allowed the priests of Baal to make the first trial by calling upon their god. But after doing so from morning till evening amid all kinds of wild frenzy, no fire descended to burn up the sacrifice.

Elijah then commanded them to fill up the trenches about the altar with barrels of water, even to the third time. "And the water ran about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water." He then offered a short but earnest prayer, and "the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." The result was that the people cried out, "The Lord He is the God."

After ordering the false prophets to be slain, he told Ahab that rain would now soon fall; "and there was a great rain." Elijah then went with Ahab, hoping that

the news would prove successful in breaking down the opposition of Jezebel, but in this he soon found he was mistaken; and, fearing her wrath, he flees into the wilderness, and asks for death. Again there is help for him when and where he least expected it. "As he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a *cruse of water* at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the mount of God" (1 Kings xix. 4-8).

He journeys 180 miles, forty suns rise and set on the desert sands, ere he fixes his resting-place, an illustration of physical endurance and strength, which well confirms the sustaining power of water. As Matthew Henry quaintly says, "He who appointeth what the voyage shall be will victual the ship accordingly." All that a Bedouin Arab needs to this day is "a cake and a cruse" after a hard day's toil ("Eothen," p. 186, 5th edition). We need not, therefore, wonder at Elijah's powers of endurance.

After taking up his abode in a cave of Mount Horeb, which is generally supposed to have been the same which sheltered Moses, and thinking he is now beyond the reach of harm, all at once his inmost soul is thrilled by hearing a voice ask, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It was like a thunderclap to his dreams. What, nothing to do? No mission to fulfil, no warning voice to raise against the vices, sins, and idolatry of the world. And to how many Christians might the same question be asked, as they sit round the festive board, quaffing their glasses of wine and grog, and playing with the fiery serpent which is stinging so many. Is there nothing *for you* to do in this sin-stricken world, to put an end

to such terrible evils? Arise and stand forth as Elijah was commanded, and be assured that like him, there is a work for you to do. Ah, how few of our excuses will stand the searching gaze of the Most High.

Ultimately, Elijah found to his joy there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bent the knee to Baal. He then anoints Hazael King of Syria, and Jehu over Israel; and, finding Elisha, casts his mantle upon him as his successor. Ahab after committed a horrible crime in order to possess Naboth's vineyard, for which Elijah denounced him; in the place Naboth died, did the dogs lick up the king's blood, and Jezebel his wife soon after was removed by a terrible retribution. After other mighty deeds had been done by Elijah, such as dividing the Jordan with his mantle, in an instant he was borne away in a chariot of fire to heaven; and no more is seen of him on earth till he appears in company with Moses talking with Christ on the mount. "Fearless, independent, he towers above kings and princes; while, next to his loyalty to his God, is his true, devoted love to his country, and his firm, unsullied patriotism."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### ELISHA, THE MERCIFUL PROPHET.



BY the express command of God, Elijah anointed Elisha to succeed him when he was called away to his reward. On the ascent of Elijah to heaven, we read that his mantle fell upon Elisha with a double portion of his blessing. We then read that he was miraculously endowed, and soon after he took his mantle and divided the waters of the Jordan; and, when at Jericho, a deputation call

upon him, saying: "Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth; but the water is naught. . . . And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed the waters; there shall not be from thence any more death. So the waters were healed unto this day."

Teaching us that any kind of water which produces death must be abstained from, or it must be healed (by drainage, etc.), so as not to produce death but life.

The King of Israel, we are told, asked Elisha whether he might smite the Assyrians, who had been so marvellously delivered into his hands. Elisha replied: "Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them; and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away to their master" (2 Kings vi. 22, 23)—that is, treat them not as prisoners, but as guests. Says Trapp: "Oh, noble revenge! Thus, thus should a prophet punish his persecutors: 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink'" (see Prov. xxv. 21; Rom. xii. 20).

Soon after this we find that he was wanted again to provide a supply of water; and for this purpose he was consulted by the King of Israel, the King of Judah, and the King of Edom. It appears "they had fetched a compass of seven days' journey; and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them;" and the kings of Israel and Edom, advised by Jehoshaphat, went to him. "And Elisha said, Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your horses; . . . ye shall stop all the wells of water (of the Moabites). And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat-offering was offered, that, behold, there came water

by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water, . . . and the Israelites stopped all the wells of water" (2 Kings iii. 16-25). We then find him directing Naaman the leper to wash in the Jordan to obtain a cure for his leprosy. Then he caused the axe-head to swim like wood in the same rivers.

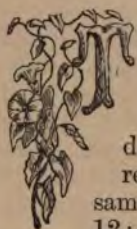
It is also interesting to note that what are called Fountains of Sultan, and known by tradition as the scene of our Lord's temptation, were originally called the Fountains of Elisha. Of this spring, Dr. Wilson says, in his "Lands of the Bible:" "There can be no doubt that it is rightly associated with the name of Elisha, as no other fount from which Jericho could be watered is to be found in this part of the valley."

Elisha, by multiplying the cruse of oil (the widow's oil), enabled her to pay off her debts, and to preserve the liberty of her children. Many other miracles of a stupendous character are related of him, and, what is still more interesting, they were, on the whole, of a merciful character. At length, worn out by his public and private labours at the age of ninety—during sixty of which he is supposed to have prophesied—just before he passed away, he prophesied that Joash should conquer the Syrians. His burial was marked by a wonderful event. God put a distinct mark of honour upon His servant by raising a dead man to life "when He touched the bones of Elisha," though, like many others, he discovered that his work was not appreciated or recognised by the people of his own age.

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## CHAPTER XX.

## OBADIAH, THE FRIEND IN NEED.



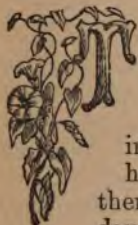
HERE are various opinions concerning the history of this person. Some think that the prophet, whose writing consists of only one chapter, and which treats of the destruction of the Edomites and the future restoration and prosperity of the Jews, is the same person who is mentioned in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12; while others think he was the governor of Ahab's house mentioned in 1 Kings xviii. 3. Whichever of these views is correct does not matter, so far as our present purpose is concerned.

It appears that Obadiah was the governor of King Ahab's household, and, notwithstanding he was strongly opposed to the idolatry which the court patronised, he was held in high confidence by his master. In the persecution raised by Jezebel, he hid one hundred of the Lord's prophets in caves, and supplied them secretly during the famine "with bread and water" (1 Kings xviii. 4). During the time he was out exploring the country in search of pasture, he met with Elijah, and was prevailed upon by him to open up the way for the prophet to be introduced to his master; while thus talking over the matter, Obadiah told Elijah what he had done in thus providing "bread and water" for the prophets, and illustrates again in this way the value of the beverage.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

## ESTHER, THE NOBLE QUEEN.



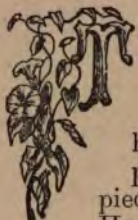
THE Book of Esther is remarkable for its romantic character and stirring incidents. It tells us how that Queen Vashti, because she would not submit to the iniquity which King Ahasuerus, her drunken husband, had commanded, was divorced. It then reveals to us that a Jewish captive, the daughter of Abihail and niece of Mordecai on account of her great beauty, was selected by the king to be his wife; and how, in a short time, from a humble Jewish captive, she was thus raised to the throne of Persia. Through this unexpected event, we also read that the destruction of the Jews, for which the king had been persuaded, when again under the influence of drink, to issue a decree, was averted, and the guilty parties to the conspiracy themselves brought to ruin instead. We insert these facts in order to take the opportunity of mentioning that in an apocryphal writing this good and true Queen Esther is described as appealing to God; that, like Daniel and his companions before Nebuchadnezzar, she had not eaten at Haman's table, nor had pleasure in the king's feast, *nor had drunk the wine of the drink-offerings.*

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## CHAPTER XXII.

## RECHABITES, THE OLDEST WATER-DRINKING FAMILY.



HIS remarkable race appear to have descended from Rechab, who is generally supposed to have lived about 900 years before Christ. The event with which we have most to do, however, seems to have taken place 600 years later. That Jonadab occupied a high social position in Israel is evident. He was the friend of Jehu, and was chosen by that king to witness his "zeal for Jehovah" in overthrowing the dynasty of Ahab, and expelling the worship of Baal. Josephus thus speaks of him: "There met him a good and righteous man, whose name was Jehonadab, and who had been his friend of old." At any rate, the records seem to indicate that he was a man whose life was directed by religious principles, in what he was thus doing at that time.

Of the origin and growth of this family little is known. We read in 1 Chron. ii. 55, "And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab." Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, is considered by Arabian tradition as the head of the tribe which divided into Hobabites and Rechabites.

The name *Rechab*, "rider," "cavalier," "horseman," is given in 2 Sam. iv. 2 to a leader of one of the two bands enlisted in the cause of Ish-bosheth. These captains were sons of Rimmon, a Benjamite. In Neh. iii. 14, mention is made of Malchiah, the son of Rechab. The Rechab mentioned in 1 Chron. ii. 55 is clearly identical with the Rechab of Jer. xxx. 2-19. When his ancestor Hemath lived is not said. Rechab

was, therefore, the father of Jonadab, and must have lived about 300 years before the time of the events recorded in Jer. xxxv.

Some writers go so far as to say that of Rechab, the founder of this race, nothing is known. He may have been the father, or he may have been the remote ancestor of Jehonadab. Professor Plumptre, in Dr. Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' also mentions another curious, and interesting conjecture, which goes so far as to connect the water-drinkers of the modern times through the Rechabites, with the prophets Elijah and Elisha. He says: "Another conjecture as to the meaning of the name is ingenious enough to merit a disinterment from the forgotten learning of the sixteenth century. Boulduc (*De Eccles. ante Leg.* iii. 10) infers from 2 Kings ii. 12, and xiii. 14, that the two great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, were known each of them in his time as the Chariot (Recheb) of Israel, *i.e.*, its strength and protection. He infers from this that the special disciples of the prophets, who followed them in all their austerity, were known as the 'sons of the chariot,' B'ne Recheb, and that afterwards, when the original meaning had been lost sight of, this was taken as a patronymic, and referred to an unknown Rechab. . . . Apart from the evidence of the name and the obvious probability of the fact, we have the statement of John of Jerusalem that Jehonadab was a disciple of Elisha." Speaking of the need of their abstinence, Professor Plumptre says: "The luxury and the license of Phœnician cities threatened the destruction of the simplicity of their nomadic life (Amos ii. 7, 8; vi. 3, 6). A protest was needed against both evils, and, as in the case of Elijah and of the Nazarites of Amos ii. 11, it took the form of asceticism. There was to be a more rigid adherence than ever to the old Arab life. What had been a traditional habit was enforced by a solemn command from the sheikh and prophet of the tribe, the destroyer of idolatry, which no one dared to transgress. They

were to drink no wine . . . nor to plant any vineyard, nor have any (Jer. xxxv. 6, 7). This was to be the condition of their retaining a distinct tribal existence. For two centuries and a-half they adhered faithfully to this rule; but we have no record of any part taken by them in the history of the period. We may think of them as presenting the same picture which other tribes, uniting the nomade life with religious austerity, have presented in later periods."

Professor Plumptre mentions several instances of tribes who acted in a similar manner. "The Nabothæans, who neither planted fruit-trees, and who habitually drunk 'wild honey' mixed with water. The Bedouins, who made locusts an article of food, as showing 'that the Baptist's life was fashioned after the Rechabite as well as the Nazarite type. In the Wahabys, whose founder, Wahab, being anxious to protect his countrymen from the revolting vices of the Turks, as Jehonadab had been to protect the Kenites from the like vices of the Phœnicians, the Bedouin reformer felt the necessity of returning to the old austerity of Arab life. What wine had been to the earlier preacher of righteousness the outward sign and incentive to fatal corruption, opium and tobacco were to the latter prophet, and, as such, were rigidly proscribed. The rapidity with which the Wahabys became a formidable party, the Puritans of Islam, presents a striking analogy to the strong political influence of Jehonadab in 2 Kings x. 15, 23."

The circumstances under which these sons of Rechab avow their principles, and refuse to take wine, are as remarkable as they are impressive. Jeremiah informs us (chap. xxxv.), that he was commissioned by God to, bring them into one of the chambers of God's house and give them wine to drink, "Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziah and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; and I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son

of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, which was above the chamber of Maaſeah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door: and I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I ſaid unto them, Drink ye wine. But they ſaid, we will drink no wine: for Jonadab the ſon of Rechab our father commanded us, ſaying, Ye ſhall drink no wine; neither ye, nor your ſons for ever . . . nor plant vineyard, nor have any . . . that ye may live many days in the land where ye be ſtrangers. Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the ſon of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our ſons, and our daughters. . . . Neither have we planted vineyards . . . and have obeyed and done all that Jonadab our father commanded us."

"It is observable," remarks Kitto in his "Daily Bible Illustrations," vol. vi. p. 263, "that he ſaid only 'Drink ye wine;' not the customary formula, which would have given it the ſhape of, 'Thus ſaid the Lord, Drink ye wine;' for it is probable, indeed it is all but certain, that they would have obeyed; the obligation of obedience to a command thus enforced, being far greater than that of obedience to the injunction of their anceſtor. As it was, they felt themſelves at liberty reſpectfully to decline this invitation. They ſaid, 'We do not drink wine,' and proceeded to give the intereſting recital of their forefather's injunction, which they affirmed had always been ſtrictly obeyed during the three hundred years which had elapſed ſince it was delivered."

Now, whether we agree with Kitto or not in his references, the fact ſtill remains that they reſuſed a prophet's invitation to drink wine, and we cannot but feel as we read ſuch bold and ſtartling utterances, that we are in the preſence of ſome of God's nobleſt: Men who are prepared to ſtand by the right, the good, and the true, at all coſts. And when we conſider that in thus ſpeaking their minds, they were oppoſing

one who was well-known as a prophet of the most high God, we are the more surprised. Yet it is evident they meant what they said, and were determined to abide by their decision at all costs. Would that many who profess and call themselves Christians, would be equally faithful to their convictions of duty. But, alas, how few seem to have the courage to stand out against prevailing customs and popular sentiment, much less to oppose the fashionable though pernicious drinking customs of society. It is easy to quote glibly a portion of God's Word to support such customs, but what can be said to such conduct when contrasted with the bold, fearless, and honest utterances of these sons of Rechab. They, at least, understood that obedience to their father's wishes, had a claim even before a prophet's tempting invitation to drink wine, and in this they were right, as subsequent events have proved, by the blessings which then and there were given and promised, and continued to follow their steps even down to the present times.

We shall readily perceive this, if we follow the sacred narrative which says, "Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and tell the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to My words? saith the Lord. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto Me. I have sent also unto you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way and amend your doings. . . . But ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto Me. Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them;

but this people hath not hearkened unto Me. . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever."

In confirmation of these words let us once more take the testimony of Professor Plumptre, when explaining the words, "Stand before me" (Jer. xxxv. 19), he says: "The invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar 607 B.C. drove the Rechabites from the tents. Possibly some of the previous periods of danger may have led to them settling within the limits of Judah. Some inferences may be safely drawn from the facts of Jer. xxxv. The names of the Rechabites showed that they continued to be worshippers of Jehovah. They are already known to the prophet. One of them bears the same name (ver. 3). *Their rigid Nazarite life gained for them admission into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers assigned to priest and Levites, within its precincts.* They were received by the sons or followers of 'a man of God,' a prophet, or devotee of special sanctity (verse 4). Here they are tempted and are proof against the temptation, and their steadfastness is turned into a reproof for the unfaithfulness of Judah and Jerusalem. The history of this trial ends with a special blessing, the full import of which has, for the most part, not been adequately apprehended: 'Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever' (verse 19). Whether we look on this as the utterance of a true prophet, or as a *vaticinium ex eventu*, we should hardly expect at this precise point to lose sight altogether of those of whom they were spoken, even if the words pointed only to the perpetuation of the name and tribe. They have, however, a higher meaning. The words, 'To stand before

Me' are essentially liturgical. The tribe of Levi is chosen to 'stand before' the Lord (Deut. x. 8; xviii. 5-7). In Genesis xviii. 22, Judges xx. 28, Psalm cxxxiv. 1, Jeremiah xv. 19, the liturgical meaning is equally prominent and unmistakable. The fact that this meaning is given ('ministering before Me') in the Targum of Jonathan is evidence—(1) as to the received meaning of the phrase; (2) that this rendering did not shock the feelings of the studious and devout Rabbis in our Lord's time; (3) that it was at least probable that there existed representatives of the Rechabites connected with the temple services in the time of Jonathan. This, then, was the extent of the new blessing. *The Rechabites were solemnly adopted into the families of Israel, and were recognised as incorporated into the tribe of Levi. Their purity, their faithfulness, their consecrated life, gained for them, and gained for other Nazarites that honour.* In Lamentations iv. 7, we may, perhaps, trace a reference to the Rechabites, who had been the most conspicuous examples of the Nazarite life in the prophet's time, and must be the object of his admiration."

In support of these statements, Professor Plumptre cites several commentators on the Bible. "Vatablus," he says, "mentions a Jewish tradition that the daughters of the Rechabites married Levites, and that thus their children came to minister in the temple. Clarius conjectures that the Rechabites themselves were chosen to sit in the general council. Sanctius and Calmet suppose them to have ministered in the same way as the Nethinim. Serrarius identifies them with the Essenes; Scaliger with the Chasidim, in whose name the priests offered special daily sacrifices, and who in this way were 'standing before the Lord' continually. Augustine refers to a singular inscription in LXX. Version to Psalm lxxi., indicating that the 'sons of Jonadab' shared the captivity of Israel, and took their places among the Levite psalmists who gave expression

to the 'sorrows of the people.' There is also a significant mention of Malchiah the son of Rechab in Nehemiah iii. 14 as having 'repaired the gate, and built it up and set up the doors thereof and the bars thereof.' In the twelfth century Benjamin of Tudela mentions that near El Jubar, he found Jews who were named Rechabites. They tilled the ground, kept flocks and herds, *abstained from wine and flesh*, and gave tithes to teachers who devoted themselves to studying the law, and weeping for Jerusalem. They were 10,000 in number, and were governed by a prince, Solomon-han-Nasi, who traced his genealogy up to the house of David."

Coming down to still more recent times we find Dr. Wolff giving a very strange and detailed account of their condition. He says in his "Journal," 1829, ii. 334, that the Jews of Jerusalem and Yemen told him that he would find the Rechabites of Jer. xxxv. living near Mecca. When he came near Senaa he came in contact with a tribe, the Beni-Khaibr, who identified themselves with the sons of Jonadab. With one of them, Mousa, Wolff convened, and reports as follows: "I asked him, 'Whose descendants are you?' Mousa answered, 'Come, and I will show you,' and read from an Arabic Bible the words of Jer. xxxv. 5-11. He then went on, 'Come, and you will find us 60,000 in number. You see the words of the prophet have been fulfilled, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever.'" In a later "Journal" (1839, p. 389) he tells us of a second interview with Mousa, and describes them as strictly keeping to the old rule.

While even so late as 1862 Signor Pierotti, in a paper "On Recent Notices of the Rechabites," read at the Cambridge meeting of the British Association, tells us he "met with a tribe calling themselves by that name near the Dead Sea, about two miles south-east from it. They had a Hebrew Bible, and said their prayers at the tomb of a Jewish Rabbi. They told him precisely the same story as had been told to Wolff thirty years before."

May we not sum up the whole of this extraordinary



story with the suggestive words of Dr. Guthrie: "Happy family! of how few, if any, of ours could it be said in which, for three hundred years, there had never been a drunkard to break a mother's heart, or bring shame o'er those who loved him, and thus fill a dishonoured grave! Such was Jonadab's privilege, and how many sad mourners have wished that theirs had been so also! Holding prevention to be better than cure (or attempt at cure), and, as all experience proves, it is much easier to keep people *out* of temptation than to save them *in* it, Jonadab, when enjoining his descendants to drink no wine, sought thus to protect them from temptation, forbidding them—though they might have used the fruit of the vine in many other ways than drink—to plant a vineyard. Peace of conscience and purity of mind turn much more on our avoiding than (in courting with the hope of) resisting temptations. It is wiser, if it be possible, to flee than to fight them; a great truth taught us by a higher authority than Jonadab. It stands embodied in the Lord's Prayer—and that not the least important of its petitions—'Lead us not into temptation.'"

We can readily learn some very important lessons from these brave and obedient sons:—

1. That we should never violate our pledge to abstain from intoxicating drinks, even though good people may through mistaken kindness, or any other reasons, urge us to do so.

2. We should take a "life-long pledge" to abstain.

3. We should train our children in the same way.

4. Total abstinence is favourable to the enjoyment of good health and long life.

5. Total abstinence is helpful in resisting other evil corruptions by which we may be surrounded. These Rechabites were chosen by God to act as reproofs to the children of Israel.

6. Those who advise others to abstain from the use of *intoxicating* drinks, are helpful to the cause of morality, *purity*, and *sobriety*.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE FIRST BAND OF HOPE.



ANIEL and his three companions appear to have been princes or nobles belonging to the tribe of Judah. They were chosen to undergo a process of training for three years, that they might be fitted to stand in the palace before the king. Though captives, it appears that the king fully intended to treat them with humanity, consideration, and even generosity; so much was this the case, that he ordered them to be fed daily with the same kind of food and drink as he used himself. We are told, "And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were, of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar, and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank;" and after some further conversation with the prince, he said, "Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenances of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the

king's meat. Then Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse" (Dan. i. 6-16).

Now, it appears clearly from these records that these Hebrew youths were not ashamed to be classed among the Water-drinkers of the Bible. They were handsome in person, blameless in character, and evidently brave enough to stand true to their own conviction of duty, whatever others might be disposed to say or do. It is very clear, also, that they did not act from ignorance, or mere prejudice. They were selected because they appeared to be the best, and most intelligent among the captives. Neither do we read that God frowned upon them, or held them guilty for the course they pursued.

Referring to the reasons by which Daniel and his companions were actuated in this matter, Barnes says: "It is not improbable that the food which was offered had been in some way connected with idolatry, and that participation in it would be construed as countenancing the worship of idols, . . . that possibly some of it might consist of articles which, by Jewish law, was prohibited as unclean, . . . and that he and his companions were, doubtless, restrained from partaking of the food and drink offered to them by a regard to the principles of temperance in which they had been educated, and by a fear of the consequences which would follow from indulgence. They had evidently been trained in the ways of strict temperance. But now new scenes opened to them, and new temptations were before them. They were among strangers. They were noticed and flattered. They had an opportunity of indulging in the pleasures of the table, such as captive youth rarely enjoyed. This opportunity, there can be no doubt, they regarded as a temptation to their virtue, and as in the highest degree perilous to their principles, and they, therefore, sought to resist the temptation. They were captives,—exiles from their country,—*in circumstances of great depression and humiliation,*

and they did not wish to forget that circumstance, . . . and they were doubtless restrained by a reference to the dangers which would follow. It required not great penetration or experience, indeed, to perceive that, in their circumstances,—young men, as they were, suddenly noticed and honoured,—compliance would be perilous to their virtue; but it did require uncommon strength of principle to meet the temptation.”

That the high state of health they enjoyed, and the improved condition they manifested in their countenances, was not due to any miraculous interference, may be gathered from the following very wise remarks by Stuart. He says: “In reviewing the disclosures made by the narrative contained in verses 12 to 17, it seems plain that the writer meant to exhibit the thriving state of the lads, upon their slender diet, as a special blessing of Providence upon their *pious resolution*; for so, in the view of the Mosaic prescriptions, it would seem that it ought to be called. Yet it is not certain that the writer intends their thrift to be regarded by his readers as strictly *miraculous*. Certainly, in a climate so excessively hot as that of Babylon, a vegetable diet, for many months in the year, would be better adapted to occasion fairness of countenance and fulness of flesh than a luxurious diet of various highly-seasoned meats. That the God of Heaven *rewarded* the pious resolution, and the persevering abstinence of the Jewish lads, lies upon the face of the narrative; and this is a truth adapted to useful admonition, especially to the Jews, who dwelt among the heathen, and were under strong temptations to transgress the Mosaic laws. The uncommon and extraordinary powers which were conferred upon these young Hebrews, are placed in such a light as to show that their peculiar gifts were the consequence of their pious resolution and firmness.”

Even Dr. Rule in his “Historical Exposition of Daniel,” though not at all in favour of the temperance movement as such, is obliged to confess that, “It can-

not be fairly inferred that they suffered any severe privation" in thus totally abstaining from the king's wine. "They were content to live moderately and humbly. They also abstained from wine, and so their temperance was exemplary; and inducements to intemperate habits and disreputable associations, as well as idolatrous banquets, were avoided. All this gave evidence of perfect self-control; but far above all was their separation, *at any cost*, from the splendid idolatry of that 'great Babylon.' How stern was their endurance, and how triumphant their faith, under the power of a special blessing, the narrative shows; but let it be kept in mind that the virtue of Daniel and his friends was not exhausted in matters of diet (who ever thought it was?), but that it shone brightly in their preference of any discomfort, any suffering, death in any form, to even the slightest appearance of compromise with sin."

To all of which we have only to add that it would be well if Christian men and women in these times would be equally willing to hold themselves aloof from "the slightest appearance of compromise with sin," which is so largely associated with the drinking customs of the day, especially when by doing so they need not suffer any discomfort, any suffering, or death in any form; but, on the contrary, will reap for themselves life, health, comfort, and blessing, and be able to rid the land of its greatest enemy and its foulest source of immorality, sin, and idolatry; or, as Dr. Morton Brown remarks:—

"For the possession of health, luxuries are not required; and that ought not to be esteemed beautiful which is not healthful. Many and most ruinous are our artificial wants; few and very simple the requirements of nature; and to be holy in our lives, we must be pure in our habits and simple in our tastes. The pious Daniel and his companions were servants of the the Holy Lord God."

It is interesting to remark that total abstinence from

intoxicating drinks is never associated in the Bible with anything which humiliates, degrades, or in any way renders a person unfit for the highest and noblest work to which he may be called. Whereas, on the contrary, such is the influence of all intoxicating drinks, there is nothing too wicked or atrocious, but what its victims will attempt, and nothing too costly, but which they are willing to sacrifice to satisfy its cravings, or even too sacred to abandon, in order to be free to indulge in its enslaving influence. If, therefore, the inward life of the spirit should be manifested in the life of the Christian by a living opposition to whatever injures and degrades man, it ought not, yea, indeed, cannot be opposed to any effort which is clearly adapted to give happiness, without the risk of any accompanying or consequent evil. The temperance movement has proved itself in all parts of the world to be just such an instrumentality, and therefore it ought to be embraced by all who profess to call themselves Christians.

After all, this is only in harmony with the teachings of daily life—namely, that luxurious living is hazardous living. The use of such kind of food always weakens, and must degenerate those who use it. Hence we are told, "Be not desirous of dainties, for they are deceitful meat" (Prov. xxiii. 3). While, on the contrary, those who are satisfied with living upon good, plain, wholesome food, enjoy better health, live longer lives, run fewer moral risks, and every other way manifest the wisdom of these Hebrew youths, in being content to abide by a simple yet natural course of eating and drinking, while it is from among the ranks of such that the most devoted heroism, and the highest form of life can be found, when the temptation or the peril arises to call it forth, or to test its value, such as was the case in these "FOUR BAND OF HOPE HEROES."

The sturdy conduct and the noble steadfastness which these Hebrew youths manifested, may teach our young people some good lessons.

1. It is our duty to act up to our own convictions of right, whatever other people may think or say of our conduct.

2. It is wiser to prefer a simple mode of life, rather than one of luxury.

3. We should try to be prepared with intelligent objections against the use of intoxicating liquors.

4. We should be firm to our principles, even if it should bring upon us opposition, persecution, and even loss.

5. We should always remember that the path of duty is always the path of safety.


6. We should look forward with confidence to the triumph of truth and righteousness.

7. We should cultivate implicit trust in God, that even in the fiercest trials He will never leave or forsake us.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### DANIEL, THE WATER-DRINKING PRIME MINISTER.

F ever there was a model man to whom young men may look with confidence as an example worthy of imitation, it is DANIEL, the prophet of the court. His character has generally been considered as faultless. Not that he was sinless, but a striking illustration of what the grace of God can help a man to be, in the midst of much corruption and manifold temptations. His age, at the time of his arrival as a captive at Babylon, has been fixed between twelve and eighteen,—just at that critical time when so many start either right or wrong in their course of life. Daniel, however, had purposed in his heart that *he would not* defile himself; and it was not long ere he

had an opportunity of avowing his determination, and also of making known his principles.

Nor is he only remarkable as a man. Indeed, it may with truth be affirmed that, among all the *prophets* of the Lord, none stand out more remarkable than Daniel. The character of the circumstances, from his earliest days, in which he was placed, and the varied temptations to which he was exposed, alike place him in the foremost ranks of those who have proved true to principle, and faithful to God. His manly, prudent, consistent, and holy life stands out so conspicuous, as to mark him as one of those in whose company we feel it an honour to be found, and whose example it will be well for all to endeavour to follow, especially when we notice, that we do not find him even once in the slightest degree faltering in the path of virtue, or failing to stand true to his convictions in his service to God. It was truly his meat and drink to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and, amid the vice and corruptions of the royal court, to keep himself unspotted from the world.

There is something wonderfully sublime in the whole character of Daniel. The calm, uniform dignity which marks all his actions and words, raises him infinitely in our estimation. It never leaves him for one moment. It matters not whether he has to stand in the presence of royalty, or whether he is summoned into the hall of Belshazzar's feast. It presides over him as he lies in the lions' den as a halo of glory. No temptations sully its brightness, no blandishments tarnish its lustre. In defiance of the seductions, and even terrors, of a wicked and licentious court, it lives and is retained in all its integrity. The most fearless of men, the most ardent of patriots, the most devout of saints, one of the most admirable of Scripture worthies,—we thank thee that thou hast given us such an example of moral courage, and heroic purpose, in refusing to take the king's wine, and manifesting the superiority of Water-drinking!



Yes; Daniel had *determined* in his heart that he would not defile himself. This evidently shows that it was far more than even a mere purpose; it was a *bold resolve*. He had laid it upon his conscience that, come what might, he would remain firm. He never contemplated for a single moment that any contingency would arise to shake his constancy. He never dreamt for a second of defiling himself. It is on this grand resolve the whole of Daniel's goodness, greatness, and success turn. To that noble steadfastness the world owes one of the most remarkable portions of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament; and through it many of God's children have been enabled to gather courage and help to maintain a good confession before men, when circumstances have occurred to test their faith or try their principles. Trapp, speaking of this, says: "Daniel's piety appeareth in this, that he maketh conscience of smaller evils also, such as most men in his case would never have boggled at. He scrupled at eating of it; and why? (1.) Because it was often such as was forbidden by the law of God (Jer. xi.; Deut. xiv.). (2.) Because it was so used as would defile him and his fellows against the Word of God; for these heathens, to the shame of many Christians, had their grace afore meat,—as it were, consecrating their dishes to their idols before they tasted of them. (3.) They could not do it without offence to their weaker brethren, with whom they choose rather to sympathise in their adversity than to live in excess and fulness. (4.) . . . They knew that intemperance was the mother of many mischiefs. . . . Any one of these reasons had been of force enough to prevail with Daniel. . . . He knew well that the least hair casteth its shadow. A barley-corn laid on the sight of the eye will keep out the light of the sun as well as a mountain. The eye of the soul, that will 'see God,' must be kept very clear (Matt. v. 8, etc.)."

The drinking of wine which Daniel refused is marked by Herodotus as one of the noted customs in Babylon;

and that it was such may be readily seen from Daniel's account of Belshazzar's banquet, as well as from other authorities. Now, if the king of Babylon drank of the wine which had been consecrated to the heathen god, amid the usual noise of music and hymns, it would have been nothing less than a formal participation of idolatry, for Daniel to have joined in such a thing. But this he would not do. Whatever the king and his associates might do, Daniel was not prepared in such a way, to deny the God in whom he had trusted, by conforming to such idolatrous customs. He refused absolutely to defile himself; and in taking this stand, we feel that he only did that which common honesty to his own convictions of duty to his God required. He could do no less if he would preserve himself from the charge of being a time-server, or of having forsaken the God of his fathers for a mess of pottage.

Nor is it difficult to trace many good reasons for his so acting, and among others this :—"Ur of the Chaldees" was the chief seat of the worship of the moon-god. Nebuchadnezzar built a temple in Babylon to this god, and there was another in the neighbouring city of Borsippa. He invoked him as "the Strengtheners of my fortifications," and "the supporting Architect of my stronghold." Now, if Daniel had taken any part in paying honour to the idol whose worship Abraham had solemnly abandoned, and whose chief seat he had quitted by the express command of God, it would have practically looked like a formal renunciation of Daniel's abandonment of the faith of his forefather, a thing which from the practical and earnest character of his piety, he for one moment, it can be readily perceived, could never contemplate.

Even of the Chaldee studies of Daniel and his companions Jerome makes some very sensible remarks. "Daniel," he says, "who would not eat meat nor drink wine brought from the king's table lest he should be defiled, knew that the very wisdom and learning of the

Babylonians was sin, and would never have consented to learn what it was not lawful to know. But they learned it, not that they might follow it, but to judge of it, and to convince of error them that did it." In like manner those who follow his noble example of abstaining from intoxicating drinks in modern times, do so that they may not be defiled, and many of them have learned by experience, quite enough to be able to give good reasons, that it is an error to suppose that such drinks are either needful for the body, or good for the soul, and therefore it is wiser to let them alone than it is to use them.

We have not space to follow in detail all the incidents which make the character of Daniel so valuable as a model. How he excelled in wisdom and understanding above his contemporaries. How he was able to interpret the king's dream, and become one of the king's great men. How he received many valuable gifts. How he served under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus, as Prime Minister, and by his skill and forethought provided against the plots and stratagems of designing men,—anticipated and prepared for the wants of the people in the shape of laying up stores of food for the times of famine, and in many other ways providing so successfully, what the constant requirements of a great and mighty nation rendered needful. How he was by the craft and wickedness of his enemies cast into a den of lions, for not withholding his prayers unto his God. Let us, however, glance at one event, where we find him sent for in a hurry, to interpret the writing which appeared upon the palace wall, as Belshazzar and his nobles were drinking wine from the sacred cups, which had been taken from the temple of the Lord (chap. v. 13-16). "This is indeed *that* Daniel," says Dr. Rule. "This is the young man who, with three of his friends, refused the king's meat, and, living best without the indulgences which serve to pamper courtiers, and make the minds of young men feeble, showed a *cheerful countenance* and a robust frame. He is here

again, hale and happy, counting his age not less than eighty-six. The Spirit of God has not left him. He is at least as wise as ever, and quite as good. He stands before a weak, drunken despot, and a thousand lords beset him with importunity, himself serene and ready, come what will, to make the interpretation, and dissolve the doubts."

"Then Daniel answered and said before the king (chap. v. 17-27), "THOU ART WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE, AND FOUND WANTING," etc. "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain" (ver. 30). Yes, his mighty kingdom was taken during a drunken revel. When the morning arose the "Head of Gold" had perished. But, amid the deadly confusion and slaughter of those dark hours, by some wondrous overruling providence, the aged saint who had predicted its doom, dwelt secure under the wings of the Most High God. Other work and trials were in store for him, and golden opportunities of illustrating the pureness of his character, the steadfastness of his faith, and his unflinching courage, when called upon to declare the whole council of God, even to those in high places and apparently boundless power.

When Cyrus, whom we have elsewhere also alluded to, as one of the Water-drinkers of the Bible, first took Babylon, he appears to have formed a very high opinion of Daniel. This, no doubt, arose from what he had heard of his doings, during his long term of office under the three kings of Babylon. We can readily conceive that the prophet would turn this influence to account, in seeking for the restoration of the Jews to their own land. Daniel very likely placed before the king the prophecies concerning the part he was to take in delivering the people, which had been written 140 years before he was born. Cyrus at length issued the decree for the Jews to return and re-erect their own city. In this way Daniel lived to see the close of the seventy years' captivity, though he himself never returned from exile. He is supposed to have been over ninety years

of age at his death; but where it occurred, or when, is alike unknown; although it is generally believed that he stayed at Babylon in order that he might better be able to secure, by his influence at court, the interest and welfare of his country. Well does one say of him: "Immortal prophet! long years to thee, though years of exile, were years of honour. Such a life of more than fourscore years. We crown thy brow with laurels, thou prophet of the court; we commend thy life to the study of all who love the nobility of excellence in every age. . . . Let the young mark the virtuous youth of Daniel; let the middle-aged observe his spirituality as supreme over the highest secular avocations; and let the aged contemplate and admire his godliness, his patriotism, and his power throughout a long and laborious life. Worn out with age in the service of his king, his country, and his God, at last he had nothing to do but to die. What lackest thou, O thou man of God on Jordan's brink? To such an inquiry the prophet must have replied, 'nothing more, unless heaven.'"

We may readily learn, from the example of Daniel, many valuable lessons, some of which may be named:—

1. It is very important to have a steady purpose never to defile oneself by any bad habit, or evil way. To be—or not to be—virtuous, sober, godly, requires this firmness of purpose.

2. It is better to do right with the poor, than to do wrong with the rich.

3. It is important to cultivate firmness in doing that which we know and feel to be right.

4. We should seek to be courteous even when we object to do that which we know to be wrong. Daniel *requested* of the eunuch that he might not defile himself.

5. We should seek to please God rather than man.

6. We should endeavour to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.

7. We should be ready firmly to resist everything which might defile us.

8. We should seek to be wisely acquainted with the teaching of the Word of God.

9. We should endeavour to imitate Daniel in his spirit of prayerfulness, religious earnestness, and devotedness, so that even our enemies shall have to say, "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel except we find it concerning his God."

10. We should seek to imitate Daniel in his disinterestedness. His enemies, being judges, they could find no manner of fault with him.

11. We should be ready to come out from the world, rather than be partakers of its sins and follies.

12. We should not only sing "Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone," but be ready, when occasions require it, to ACT, feeling assured that God will never forsake those who put their trust in Him, and do that which is well-pleasing in His sight.

13. That total abstinence from intoxicating drinks is consistent with good position in society, and with mental vigour, as is clearly indicated in the case of the water-drinking Prime Minister, Daniel.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### CYRUS, THE ANCIENT CONQUEROR.



IT has been said that perhaps no great conqueror ever left behind him a fairer fame than Cyrus the Great. He was the celebrated Persian conqueror of Babylon, who promulgated the first edict for the restoration of the Jews to their own land (Ezra i. 1, etc.). His mighty achievements have come down to us untarnished, inasmuch as no historian has ever recorded them. It was his honour and

privilege to be the first Gentile friend to the Jews in the time of their sorest trouble. To this important work he is called by the prophet, and Josephus says that Daniel showed him the prophecies of Isaiah which related to him, and the language of the decree would seem to sanction this assertion,—“Jehovah, the God of heaven, hath given me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” While yet a youth he signalised himself in an expedition against the Babylonians; and Xenophon represents him as addressing his chiefs, and telling them that their soldiers were all wakeful and sober, while the Babylonians were asleep, and many of them drunken. It was one of the first acts of his reign (536 B.C.) to allow the Jews to return to Judæa and rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. He is spoken of in history as a water-drinker. A story comes down to us which says that Cyrus, while acting as a cup-bearer to his grandfather, Astyages, as reported in Rollin’s “Ancient History,” is said to have given utterance to some striking remarks, which entitles him to be placed in the front rank of those who recognised the poisonous character of intoxicating drinks. When asked to taste such drinks, he refused, saying that, “he apprehended there was poison in the liquor.”

“Poison, child!” exclaimed the astonished grandsire, “How could you think so?”

“Yes, poison, papa; for not long ago, at an entertainment you gave the lords of your court—and after the guests had drank a little of this liquor—*I perceived all their heads were turned*; and when you would have danced, you could not stand upon your legs.”

Such a testimony, coming down to us from such a source, is worthy of consideration, and forcibly illustrates the foolishness of the customs which had prevailed among all classes, of using such drinks as articles of luxury on their festive occasions.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

## JOHN, THE FORERUNNER.



STANDING between the Old Dispensation and the New, like a connecting link, we find John the Baptist, another of the water-drinkers of the Bible. Of his parents it is recorded, "There was in the days of Herod, the King of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. But the angel said unto him, Fear not Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. He shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God" (Luke i. 5, 7, 13, 15, 16). "As the leper was the living symbol of *sin*, so was the Nazarite of *holiness*; nothing inflaming was to cross his lips. . . . It was fitting that the utmost severity of legal consecration should be seen in Christ's forerunner." We are, therefore, prepared to examine the evidence which we find in the New Testament in support of these claims, in order that we may show how clearly they harmonise with the teachings of the Old Testament, and also to illustrate that, as the water-drinkers of the Old Dispensation were found to consist of men and women who were known for their piety, wisdom, patriotism, so in the New, there are to be found, those who can fully compare with them, and therefore we may also be satisfied with following in their steps.



In the case of John, we find it clearly stated that, in connection with the extraordinary work to which he was divinely called, he was to be fitted for it by the possession of two qualifications—(1.) He was to be “great in the sight of the Lord;” and (2.) “Filled with the Holy Ghost,” from his birth. He was to be through the whole of his life a Nazarite; and it is remarkable how clearly the principal feature of this vow and regimen is quoted by the angel, “He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.” Speaking of this, Trapp says, “He shall be singularly qualified.” “Thou shalt call his name John,” which signifies “gracious;” or, as Matthew Henry adds, “He shall be a Nazarite, set apart to God from everything that is polluting; and, in token of that, according to the law of Nazariteship, ‘He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink,’ or, rather, neither old wine nor new; for most think the word here translated ‘strong drink,’ signifies some sort of wine, perhaps those that we call made wines, or anything that is intoxicating. He shall be as Samson was by Divine precept, and Samuel by his mother’s vow—a Nazarite for life. It is spoken of as a great instance of God’s favour to His people, that he raised up of their sons for prophets, and their young men for Nazarites; as if those that were designed for prophets were trained up under the discipline of the Nazarites. Samuel and John the Baptist were; which intimates that those that would be eminent servants of God, and employed in eminent services, must learn to live a life of self-denial and mortification, must be dead to the pleasures of sense, and keep their minds from everything that is darkening and disturbing to them.” Dean Alford says on “‘He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost,’ is a *contrast* to, and a reason for, the not drinking wine nor strong drink.” Lange says, it “plainly refers to the condition of the Nazarites.” Acts xxi. 24 shows that such vows were not unusual in Israel in New Testament times. This appointment places the forerunner, in this

respect, on a level with Samson and Samuel, who, as well as himself, were born to their parents contrary to all natural hopes and expectations;" and John Wesley in his "New Testament Notes," observes, "*Nor eat grapes*—forbidden him for greater caution, to keep him at the further distance from wine."

Looked at in the ordinary method by which men judge "greatness," John's life was the very opposite of what we generally regard as great. A poor man, living thirty years in the desert the life of an anchorite—his food consisting of locusts and wild honey—without any home—destitute of many of the common comforts of life; at length locked up in a prison for preaching the truth, and exposing the wickedness of a king; and finally beheaded because of his faithfulness, and buried by his disciples, he then disappears, and nothing more is heard of him in the sacred record. But when men are weighed in God's righteous balances, it will be seen that he was, after all, "a burning and shining light," whose glory shall never grow dim, and whose greatness shall never lose its significance and purity.

John was a man of masculine spirit, earnest mind, sanctified nature, ardent zeal, lofty purpose, strong nerve, boundless will, untiring energy, single eye, and ceaseless toil. He lives apart from men and business, to prepare by prayer and communion with God for his mighty work. Slaking his thirst at the cooling stream, and satisfying his hunger with the honey which dropped from the rocks and the locusts that swarmed the air. How simple his wants and how easily supplied. It would be interesting if we had a record of his thoughts as he thus, year after year, held communion with Heaven.

He was a man of marked *firmness*. Christ gives this testimony: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" No! "A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled and live delicately, are in kings'

courts." He was also full of *humility*. "After me cometh a man, which is preferred before me . . . whose shoes I am not worthy to loose. . . . He must increase, but I must decrease." He was *fearless*. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," he boldly announced. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Oh ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" And, best of all, he said, when pointing to Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He told the wicked king, "It is not lawful for thee to have her," as he saw him with his brother Philip's wife. For which he was ultimately arrested, cast into prison, and bound like a felon; and, on Herod's birthday, when the king was inflamed with wine, with a wicked oath he promised the daughter of Herodias, after she had reeled before him a lascivious dance, that he would give her whatever she asked. Having been prepared by her wretched mother, she claimed the head of John, and it was brought. Thus, though he was a life-long *water-drinker*, he perished through strong drink. When Herod awoke in the morning to see the result of his drunken fit, it was too late to repent of the deed he had done. Of how many precious lives has strong drink robbed the world; the innocent suffering through the guilty one's folly.

We may gather from the life of John the following practical inferences:—

1. That intoxicating drinks are not essential to great powers of endurance.
2. That such drinks cannot be conducive to health, or the angel of the Lord would not have forbidden their use.
3. That total abstinence from such drinks will not in any way unfit us for the discharge of the physical or religious duties of life.
4. That such drinks are not needful to achieve greatness, *inasmuch* as of John it was said, "He shall be great

in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink."

5. That such drinks are not essential to true goodness. The Saviour declared, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." For, as Ambrose says, "Greatness in the sight of the Lord is greatness of soul, greatness of virtue." Or, as Poole adds, "No lovers of wine or strong drink can be great men in the sight of God."

6. That holiness can be secured better without wine and strong drink, as the venerable Bede puts it, "John, and others like him, that they might always remain Nazarites (*i.e.*, holy), are careful always to abstain from wine or strong drink."

7. It is helpful to all who wish to prepare the way of the Lord to abstain; as Poole says, "The minister of the Gospel must not be one given to wine." While God Himself names it as one of His blessings to Israel, "I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites."

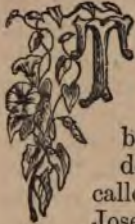
8. That a life of self-denial is helpful to prepare for a life of usefulness.

9. That a life of self-indulgence may not only unfit us for the great duties of life, but may prepare us for deeds which may darken our path, and perhaps lead to ruin.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

## JESUS, THE SAVIOUR.



HERE is still to be found a well of water, a few miles to the east of Nablous, which is said by the people to be Jacob's Well. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament; but it is supposed either to have been handed down by tradition that he dug it, or to be so called because it was near to the land he gave to Joseph. It is dug in a firm rock about three yards diameter and thirty feet deep. One day, about twelve o'clock, which was the common time of the Jewish meal, Jesus sat down by this well. His disciples had gone away to buy bread. The heat of the day, no doubt, was excessive, and Jesus, being weary with his journey, felt rest would be acceptable. Just at that moment, a woman drew near. How many important events in man's life turn upon what are called trivial things. A single step at a certain moment—a passing thought—a casual meeting. It was so in this case. Had this woman come earlier or later, Jesus had not been there. But, to Him, nothing happens by chance; and, as Dr. Bonar says, "Jesus walked till He was weary to convert this one soul."

Among the interesting sayings which mark the life of Jesus Christ, are those which are recorded during this visit to Samaria. These wonderful words which he spake to the woman are instinct with beauty to this day. Let us note them:—"Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus, therefore, being weary with His journey, sat thus on the well; and it was about the sixth hour. Then cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that

thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and Who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence, then, hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband." He thus revealed His gracious purpose, and, at the same time, led the woman to recognise Him as a prophet. We do not feel at all surprised that, though the disciples marvelled that He talked with the woman, that she "left her water-pot and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" (John iv. 6-29.)

From this narrative we can clearly learn that, though our Lord was weary and thirsty, He was not ashamed to ask for a draught of water to slake His thirst; though it is possible—yea, even probable—that some who bear His name would be afraid to do so, perhaps, in these days. Neither did He despise this, the best beverage which man can take, as too many, alas! are apt to do. Surely, if He was content with the beverage which His Heavenly Father had provided for so many generations, we shall be wise if, like Him, we are satisfied with the same.

In the 110th Psalm, which is regarded by commen-

tators as prophetic of Jesus Christ, it is said, "He shall drink of the brook by the way." "These words were understood," says Spurgeon, "by Junius and Tremellius, long ago, as meaning, 'He shall steadily press on to victory,' as generals of energy act who, in pursuing routed foes, stay not to indulge themselves in meat and drink." Hengstenberg and others substantially approve of this view. Most seem inclined to take *Gideon* as the type that best expresses the idea. Pressing on to victory, Messiah, like Gideon, "faint, yet pursuing," as he passed over Jordan, shall not desist till all are won. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He hath set judgment in the earth." Perhaps the full idea is this: His career was irresistibly successful, like that of Gideon; for He allowed nothing to detain Him, nor did He shrink in the enterprise from any fatigue, nor did He stop to indulge the flesh. If we take it thus, there is both the Humiliation and Exaltation of the Son of Man contained in the words; and Phil. ii. 8, 9 supplies a commentary.

There is no doubt the Saviour often refreshed Himself, on His journeys of mercy, by drinking at the wayside streams. The full value of *living* waters is well understood in Eastern countries. Says one:—

" Traverse the desert, and then you can tell  
What treasures exist in the deep, cold well;  
Sink in despair on the red parched earth,  
And then you can reckon what water is worth."

We sometimes hear it flippantly said, "*I follow my Master's example; He took wine, and so do I.*" To which we reply we have yet to learn that we are expected, much less bound, *literally* to imitate His example in *all* things. Are we expected to walk on water? Are we bound even to go apart into a mountain to pray, when there is none within miles of where we live? He said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Are we to break up our homes, and go

and do likewise? "He *humbled* Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Are we to do the same? Yes, if we seek to carry the same *spirit* rather than the *letter* into all we say or do. If, like Him, we seek constantly to be about our Father's business, to love Him with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and "our neighbour as ourself," and manifest, by the same kind of willing, cheerful, self-denying spirit, that we are ready even to lay down our life if required, that others may be saved and His kingdom advanced. It is this kind of practical religion which is wanted in these days. We have plenty of talk, singing, and profession; we want more reality, and practical evidence of whose we are, and whom we serve.

Of one other thing we may be quite certain—Jesus Christ has not—and, indeed, could not—either by His teaching or example, oppose what God teaches, approves, and commands. If God by His prophets has taught and approved of the practice of water-drinking in preference to wine-drinking; if, by the practice of the Nazarites, Rechabites, priests, and other eminent persons whose history we find recorded in the Bible, we learn that water-drinking everywhere, and at all times, met with the Divine approbation and sanction; and that people were even commanded to abstain from wine,—then we may safely come to the conclusion that we cannot do better than obey such instructions, follow such examples, and enjoy the same physical and moral blessings, which have ever accompanied those who have, from one cause or another, been led to adopt the same practice, and to walk by the same rule.

There is also another method by which we may very fairly arrive at the same conclusion. It is said of Christ, "It became Him to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15). To do this, He had to illustrate and fulfil everything which the law had typified concerning Him—all the types of His person, the offices He filled,



and the work He performed. Now, of these offices three are particularly noticeable—(1) The Prophet, (2) the Priest, (3) the King. We have seen in other places that of three of these personal types they were *perpetual water-drinkers* from the time of their entering on their offices down to their deaths. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet like unto me" (Deut. xviii. 13); "Thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest" (Luke i. 76). Now we have seen that for forty years, while Moses was sustaining the typical characters, he was a water-drinker (Deut. xxix. 6), and that John the Baptist was also a water-drinker (Luke i. 15). Then Aaron, as high-priest, from the time of his taking office to his death, was not only prohibited from using intoxicating drinks (Lev. x. 8, 9), but during the whole of his official life was also a water-drinker. The third typical character was also prohibited from using wine: "It is not for kings to drink wine; lest they drink and forget the law" (Prov. xxxi. 4, 5). It thus appears to be as clear as possible from these typical cases that, as all were excluded from the use of wine and strong drinks—Moses, who combined the offices of king and prophet; John, that of prophet; and Aaron, that of priest—that as they, during their *official* life, were water-drinkers, so Jesus Christ (at the very least), during His official life, if He was to fulfil the types, must have acted on the same principle, even if it did not also form part of His whole life.

We may in passing allude to the oft-repeated objection raised by those who refer to our Lord's first miracle. In another work ("The Four Pillars of Temperance") the author has replied to this objection, and would only add the following very suggestive answer by Rev. T. Pearson in his valuable book, "The Bible and Temperance." He says: "Now, we are bound to explain this miracle in accordance with our Lord's character and teaching; and if so, we cannot suppose the wine intoxicating. In order to solve the difficulty, the first point to decide is, did

Christ act as man, or as God, in turning the water into wine? Those who say He made intoxicating wine suppose Him to have acted as man, and to have made the same kind of wine as man makes. On the other hand, we suppose Him to have acted as God, and to have made by miracle such a wine as God makes every year by means of the vine tree. In performing this miracle our Lord could not act as man, and therefore He could not have made the same kind of wine that man makes. This miracle is different from the miracle of feeding the multitude, and the difference is noteworthy. When feeding the multitude He took the loaves and fishes and multiplied the substance; but He did not adopt this course at the marriage feast. In the case of the loaves and fishes there was no evil element, and therefore nothing that He might not multiply by a creative act; but in the case of intoxicating wine there was an evil element, and therefore He would not multiply the *wine made by man*, some of which might have been intoxicating; but He made wine out of *water*, in which there was no element of evil. . . . That there might be no mistake, He turned *water* into wine, thereby refusing to touch the wine made by man."

St. Augustine also teaches the same when he says: "For He on that marriage day made wine in the six jars, which He ordered to be filled with water—He also now makes it every year in the vine. For as what the servants had poured into the water jars was turned into wine by the power of the Lord, so also that which the clouds pour forth is turned into wine by the power of the self-same Lord. But we cease to wonder at what is done every year; its very frequency makes astonishment to fail."

Coming down to even modern times we find the same truth illustrated in quite an incidental manner. It is said in M'Cheyne's "Narrative of a Mission to the Jews," that when attending a Jewish marriage "wine flowed plentifully as at Cana, but, being the simple wine of the

country, not the slightest riot or extravagance was visible."

But it may be asked, Can you class our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ among the water-drinkers of the Bible? We think we can. Nor are we alone in this opinion. That earnest and good man, Dr. Miller, in "Nephalism," went so far as to say that "If I found it proved that He either Himself drank intoxicating wine, or made it and caused it to be drunk by others, my mouth would be for ever shut as an advocate of total abstinence."

As he so clearly, and to our minds so conclusively meets the inquiry, "Did Jesus Christ ever Himself drink intoxicating (fermented) wine?" let us notice what he says in reply: "The only ground for alleging the affirmative is, that He came in contrast to John the Baptist. John was a Nazarite; He was not." "John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and ye say he hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber (or wine-drinker), a friend of publicans and sinners" (Luke vii. 33, 34). There is no admission here, of course, of any use of wine immoderate or injurious, or in any way improper, any more than in the eating of bread there was anything supposed to be in the slightest degree bordering upon gluttony. All that is meant is, that while John came as a Nazarite, drinking no wine, the Nazarene came, not as a Nazarite, but partaking occasionally of wine, of course in a manner and degree absolutely devoid of all sin. Now, if it had been necessary to prove His freedom from the Nazarite vow, through infringement of its terms, by His partaking of fermented, and consequently intoxicating wine, my case falls to the ground. But how stand the facts? The Nazarite's vow we find thus described: "He shall separate himself from wine (*yayin*) and strong drink (*shechar*), and shall drink no *vinegar of wine*, or *vinegar of strong drink*, neither

shall he drink *any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried*. All the days of his separation shall he eat *nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk*" (Num. vi. 3, 4). In order to assert His liberty from that vow, then, it was enough that He should partake of "moist grapes or dried," or of "*any liquor of grapes,*" or of "*anything that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.*" The wine used might be fermented, or unfermented; if the product of the grape at all, that was enough. And with that option is it reasonable—is it possible—to believe that He preferred at any time that which contained the element of intoxication? Is such an act credible on the part of Him of whom it was prophesied, "Butter and honey shall He eat, *that He may know to refuse evil and choose the good*"? (Isa. vii. 15.).

Did He ever partake of fermented wine, mingled, or pure, as a medicinal agent, in the crisis of sickness, exhaustion, or pain? We cannot positively tell. But this much we do know, that in the inspired narrative of his terrible decease accomplished at Jerusalem, these solemn words occur: "They gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; *but He received it not*" (Mark xv. 23).

Now, this one fact clearly proves that Jesus Christ refused to drink intoxicating wine; and we conclude that, if He refused it in this one case, on the ground of its being intoxicating, He would, in every other case, do so for the same reason. If He thus refused when His physical nature might seem to require it as a medicine, surely He would also refuse it as a beverage when in health. If He would not drink it when dying, it is quite impossible to suppose He would do so when living. If such drinks would interfere with His *suffering* the will of God, how could they help Him to *do* the will of God? We, therefore, say that consistency demands that we should conclude that He always abstained from such drinks, inasmuch as He must have known that He

could not use anything, either in eating or drinking, which would have the tendency to injure the body, corrupt the mind, and, in this way, destroy the harmony which ever existed between His natural desires and the convictions of His higher nature. He could no more touch such drinks, than He could touch any other evil thing.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### MATTHEW, THE WILLING CONVERT.



**A**MONG the traditions which come down to us concerning the life of the apostles, there is one which attributes to St. Matthew that of being a total abstainer (*Clemens Alexandrinus Pæd.* ii. 2, p. 174). He was a son of Alpheus; and it is generally supposed that James, the son of Alpheus, was a son of Mary, the wife of Cleophas, who was a sister of the mother of Jesus (John xix. 25). If this is correct, then Matthew was one of the relatives of Jesus, and, therefore, from James he may have learnt some of the habits peculiar to the Essenes, and become also a convert. He was one of the apostles who did not suffer martyrdom. He was sitting collecting taxes when Jesus said to him, "Follow Me;" and although, with commendable modesty, he makes no mention of the great sacrifices he had to make in complying with the mandate, the other evangelists tell us "he left all," or, to put it in other words, he renounced his worldly prospects, and surrendered his worldly gains. This shows the true spirit of the man, and leads us to the conclusion that he would be very likely to act like St. Paul and others in the matter of abstinence from anything which he saw hindered the progress of the cause, to which he had given his life.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## PAUL, THE APOSTLE OF SELF-DENIAL.



It would be impossible to examine minutely all that is recorded of this great apostle, as illustrative of the main principles of the temperance movement; but it may with confidence be stated, that the main element from which his conduct and counsels may be considered, is that of SELF-DENIAL. From the moment when the Saviour met him on the road to Damascus, up to the last record we have of his labours, the one leading thought which ever seems uppermost is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And any amount of labour, personal sacrifice, or self-denial, was readily and cheerfully undertaken to accomplish the end which he wished to attain. All his energies were concentrated, and all his feelings governed, by the one idea of "preaching Christ and Him crucified," as "the wisdom of God," and "the power of God," to them that believe; and anything and everything which hindered the spread of the Gospel he boldly denounced, and whatever he saw and proved to be a hindrance to its success, he was ready to sacrifice, even to the giving up of his own life, so that men might be saved. Hence we find him saying: "To the weak I became as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Again, "What things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things," etc. Again he says, "For the which cause I suffer the loss of all things;" and to Titus he says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, teaching us

that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He reasoned of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment" before Felix, until he made him tremble. He sacrificed wealth, ease, fame, friendship himself, and could boldly say, "I coveted no man's silver, gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves, know that these hands have ministered to my necessities." What wondrous valour. Not content with words, he followed up what he said by *actions*, which amply testified to the sincerity of his purpose. He had to encounter "a great fight of afflictions," before which most men would have quailed. Perils beset him on every hand. Bonds and imprisonment awaited him incessantly. Of the Jews, he tells us he five times received forty stripes save one. Thrice was he beaten with rods,—was stoned, thrice he suffered shipwreck,—a day and a night he was in the deep,—perils by robbers, his own countrymen,—by the heathen—in the city, the sea, the wilderness, from false brethren. Weariness, painfulness, watchings often, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness. He was railed at, scoffed at, imprisoned, stood in jeopardy every hour, etc. And yet his courage never faltered, his patience never grew weary, his fervour never abated, his enthusiasm never flagged.

With these facts, we are not surprised to hear him press upon his followers the duty of self-denial.

The duty of practising self-denial on behalf of others, is one of the essential features of the religion of Jesus Christ. No one who desires to be ranked among the followers of the Saviour, would for a moment think of disputing this as one of the tests by which discipleship is to be judged. Christian expediency in giving up even that which is lawful, for the good of others, has

governed thousands of Christians in the past, in their desire to benefit and bless men and women. Yea, it has often been carried so far as to include that which has been innocent in itself, if, by doing so, greater good has been accomplished. But, to quote St. Paul's words, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," is altogether beside the mark, except so far as the principle is concerned. Meat, in itself, is innocent, and a good thing as a common article of diet, but if it is the cause of harm to others, and we can do them more good by letting it alone, it is clearly our duty to do so; but when it comes to the abandonment of an article which is known to be positively injurious to all who use it, then it becomes a positive duty not to use the article at all, for our own sake. Meats of all kinds are good creatures of God, and we know full well that even good people, select some kinds and leave others alone, without the slightest qualms of conscience either to themselves or others; but if it should so happen, as in the case to which St. Paul refers, even good meat should be offered in sacrifice to idols, and in this way become, in the eyes of a superstitious person, a thing of doubtful character, yet retaining all its intrinsic good qualities unimpaired, it becomes a question of very grave importance with a real Christian whether it is not expedient, to abstain from eating even a portion of the meat offered to an idol, in the presence of a newly-converted heathen brother, who has only just escaped from the darkness of paganism, and who still has a lingering suspicion that an idol is something in the world, lest, by taking it, it should prove a snare to him. It would not require a moment's thought, what should be the attitude of an established Christian, to one who thus might be called a "weak brother."

But neither wine or any other intoxicating drink is a creature of God at all. They are the product of man's inventions. They contain a poison which, like the



venom distilled from the serpent, is such a deadly enemy to man in every possible form, that it is scarcely possible to conceive of anything more hostile. Intoxicating drinks are the basest of all the idols, which the children of men have ever worshipped. They devour and destroy more than all the cars of Juggernaut and the shrines of Moloch. More widows have been destroyed by its fire, and more children have been sacrificed by its deadly waters, than ever perished in the Ganges, or passed away amid the glare of the funeral pyre. How imperative, therefore, becomes the duty of all who profess and call themselves Christians to let such drinks alone.

Such evidently was Paul's method of looking at the obstacles which arose among those with whom he had to do. "Anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," was enough for him to come to the conclusion to let it alone. It might not, it is true, be any snare to himself, but if it was one to others, then for their sake he would cease to use it. "No man liveth to himself" was his standard, and we may easily illustrate this and other precepts of St. Paul, by another quotation. He says, "Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other" (1 Cor. x. 29). It is as if he said, it is not enough to keep our own consciences pure, but we should be ready to give no occasion in our conduct to wound the consciences of others, and this way strive to have "a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man." Dr. Huntington in his "Christian Believing and Living," very forcibly remarks upon this: "It is easy enough to agree that we ought not to weaken and degrade other men's consciences, but to give up the gratification, the amusement, the pleasant and otherwise harmless habit which will certainly damage and mislead them, is not always easy. Besides, there are some questions of right, how far, in particular cases, this ought to be done. These *questions* may really complete the matter to honest

minds, and they may only furnish a subterfuge for cowardly and evasive natures, to escape a disagreeable sacrifice, without, at the same time, losing all self-respect, by abandoning the general principle. The New Testament takes pains to provide directions for a settlement of both these classes of difficulties. Whether it will be any use to appeal to that source of instruction will depend on another point—viz., whether we have determined to make the spirit and word of the New Testament, when we have found them out, the law of our lives, let them cut in on whatever comfort or indulgence, let them rebuke, chasten, and humiliate, and tax our fortitude as they may. The Christian faith predicts an infinite misery for them that tempt, betray, misguide, deprave another—for them that form companies, clubs, societies to make each other frivolous, profligate, dissolute. It treats with terrible severity any one who seems to reply when called to reckon for such outrages, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' virtually rejoicing, Yes, you are; all men are each others' keepers, educators, helpers, hinderers, saviours, or seducers. It requires all to give not only food, clothes, and money, but the ministry of encouraging words, patient assurance, honest living, aspiring thoughts, so negatively it forbids theft and killing; and if we study the whole religion through and through, we shall see that this means the robbery of any particle of virtue, honour, temperance, truth, the killing of the immortal part, quite as much as the theft of a garment, or the murder of the body it covers. In fact, all the pages of our Book of faith are marked over with these earnest counsels and expostulations about caring for other souls. It is always adjuring us to work for, to suffer for, and to that end to love other people. Such is the compass of its charity. Whether it commands or forbids, its intent is the same. Prohibitions and injunctions run into each other, and are only the two sides of one bright truth, the positive and negative

being only measurements in opposite directions of the one universal law of affection and service. The lives of the apostles were throughout consecrated, abstemious, self-sacrificing labour, for the souls of their fellow-men."

Paul, therefore, must be numbered among the Water-drinkers of the Bible. It is the opinion of most commentators that it was quite in harmony with his character and teachings therefore for him to be willing, when he found it would be a means of doing good, to be ready to take upon him even the vow of the Nazarite, as recorded in Acts xxi. 23-26. We take such conduct as fairly illustrative of what he said to the Corinthians, "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. viii. 13; see also Rom. xiv. 21). That we are not alone in this conjecture, let the following testimony from one fully competent to give us information be taken as evidence.

Speaking of the vow taken by St. Paul, Rev. S. Clarke, in Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," says: "The other reference to a vow taken by St. Paul (Acts xxi. 24), where we find the brethren at Jerusalem exhorting him to take part with four Christians who had a vow upon them to sanctify himself with them, and to be at charges with them, that they might shave their heads. The reason alleged for this advice is that he might prove to those who misunderstood him that he walked orderly and kept the law." It is, therefore, clear from this vow of St. Paul that he did not deem it wrong to abstain even from the good creatures of God; such as the pure juice of the grape and raisins, and everything connected with the vine, if by so doing he could advance the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ. Verily, justly does Mr. Clarke say of this, "Now, it cannot be doubted that this was a strictly legal Nazarite vow."

A man who was prepared to do this could also testify, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection,

lest having preached to others I myself become a cast-away." And when he was told that he should be bound hand and foot by the Holy Ghost, and when his anxious friends urged him not to throw away his life by going to Jerusalem, he could say, "What, mean you to weep and break my heart? for I am ready, not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus;" until they were so satisfied that they ceased to persuade, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." Thus, for thirty years he traversed the earth, until he could say, "I have fought a good fight,—I have finished my course,—I am ready to be offered,—the time of my departure is at hand." Yes, the fight has been a severe and long one, but it came to an end,—he is imprisoned, and at last lays down his life as a martyr, and went to receive the "crown of righteousness" which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him, and not him only, but all those who love His appearing.


Such a life and teaching is full of suggestive lessons; we can only refer to a few.

1. It is a duty to deny ourselves for the good of others.
2. It is a duty to see that we put no stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in our brother's way.
3. We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves, . . . for even Christ pleased not Himself (Rom. xv. 1, 3).
4. All things which have a tendency to that which is evil should be shunned by those who desire to see the reign of goodness established on the earth.
5. Christian men must ever be watchful, lest the great adversary gain an advantage over them.
6. We should abstain from all appearance of evil.
7. There is no moral risk, or loss of any good, by abstaining from all intoxicating drinks.
8. The bodily appetites must ever be kept in subjection to the dictates of the mind, and the welfare of the soul.

9. We should seek to be zealous for good works, for "He that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

## CHAPTER XXX.

### TIMOTHY, THE FIRST WATER-DRINKING BISHOP.

N Timothy we have a striking illustration of the advantages which flow from a pious training. His father was a Gentile; but his mother, whose name was Eunice, was a Jewess, and she appears to have educated him with great care in her own religion. Paul seems to have known this, for he says, "Continue in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. iii. 14, 15).

Such being the case, it is not at all surprising to find that one whose mind had been so well stored with the early history of Joseph, Samuel, Daniel, and others, and had also been made acquainted with these numerous passages of the Divine Word which describe the seductive and dangerous influences of strong drink should, like Daniel, resolve not to defile himself; and that he had conformed to the rule laid down by God to the Nazarite, and refrained from wine and strong drink, and that so constant was his practice, and firm his conviction of its value, that even when in a state of sickness it should require even an apostolic precept to urge him to alter his mode of life. Fortunately, the Revised Version of the New Testament helps to bring this out more clearly than has hitherto been the case. It says:

“Be no longer a drinker of water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (1 Tim. v. 23). It is, therefore, beyond question that up to that time he had been one of the Water-drinkers of the Bible; and yet, strange to say, how often has this piece of advice been quoted as an excuse for the regular, moderate drinking of intoxicating drinks as beverages, proving how easy it is to quote this one apparent reason for drinking, and yet to overlook with the greatest of composure, the large number of other passages which point out clearly the advantages which result from abstaining from wine and strong drink. It is still true of water that—

“To the days of the aged it addeth length,  
To the might of the strong it addeth strength;  
It freshens the heart, it brightens the sight,  
’Tis like quaffing a goblet of morning light.”

It is very remarkable that this advice should follow the words, “Keep thyself pure,” which seems to imply that, like Daniel, he had resolved not to defile himself, but lest, while seeking to secure the end, he should run into what might be thought a needless extreme, he was advised to use *such wine*, and only “a little,” or as small a quantity as might be known to be useful, for the complaint from which he was suffering. Now, suppose Paul had recommended any other kind of medicine, especially if it had been of a very unpalatable nature, is it likely we should ever have heard it quoted as tantamount to a recognition for the constant use of it as a beverage? We think not.

Consistency demands from those who cling to this text as a warrant for the use of wine, four things,—(1.) That they are quite sure they have the same complaint as Timothy; (2.) That they have the same kind of constitution as he had; and (3.) That they are equally certain they take the same kind of wine; (4.) and the same quantity, neither more or less. To each of these

requirements many difficulties can be raised by any one really anxious to get at the truth. Nor must we forget that, as Matthew Henry observes, "We must account at the day of judgment not only for the knowledge we had and used not, but for the knowledge we might have had and would not;" or as that very thoughtful writer, Samuel Bayley, in his "Pursuit of Truth," says:—"Impartiality of examination is, if possible, of still higher value than care and diligence. It is of little importance what industry we exert on any subject, if we make all our exertions in one direction, if we sedulously close our minds against all considerations which we dislike, and seek with eagerness for any evidence or argument which will conform our established or favourite views. What duty and common sense require of us is, that our attention be equally given to both sides of every question, that we make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with all the conflicting arguments, that we be severely impartial in weighing the evidence for each, and suffer no bias to seduce us into supine omission on the one hand, or inordinate rapacity for proof on the other."

It should also be remembered that Timothy was at that time between thirty and forty years of age, and therefore, competent to know from experience the value of his Water-drinking practice, and that Paul did not *command* but simply *recommends* him to *use* a little wine. Now it is very remarkable that Pliny gives an account of some kinds of wine which were in repute that were *unfermented*, and in one place he frankly admits that "to treat of the medicinal properties of each particular kind of wine would be labour without end, and quite inexhaustible; and the more so, as the opinions of medical men are so at variance upon the subject." If this was the case in his day, how much more is it at the present time. While it is equally clear that the less of any kind of alcoholic wine or strong drink patients use, the quicker they recover.

Let us now take the testimony of a few eminent commentators:—

Says CALVIN: "What is said amounts to this; that Timothy should accustom himself to drink a little wine for the sake of preserving his health; for he does not absolutely forbid him to drink water, but to use it as his ordinary beverage. . . . How few are there at the present day who need to be forbidden the use of water; or rather, how many are there that need to be exhorted to drink some soberly!"

Dr. HAMMOND (1653): "Use a little wine. This may be safely done by thee without incurring that danger of pollution (ver. 22). Without this way of setting it, it will not be conceivable how that which immediately follows (ver. 23) should come in, 'Drink no longer water.' Yet this I say not to interdict *thee* the medicinal use of wine."

TRAPP: "Timothy, living among the luxurious Ephesians, was so abstemious that the apostle is fain to prescribe him physic."

BARNES: "It was not for the pleasure to be derived from the use of wine, or because it would produce hilarity or excitement, but solely because it was regarded as necessary for the promotion of health; that is, as a medicine."

DODDRIDGE: "One cannot forbear reflecting here, how very abstemious Timothy must have been, to need an advice of this kind; which amounts to no more than mingling a little wine with his water."

Dr. WORDSWORTH (Introduction and Notes to Greek New Testament): "Be no longer an *hydropotes*, 'a water-drinker,' showing that hitherto Timothy had been such. Thus St. Paul bears testimony to the temperance of the Bishop of Ephesus."

From these opinions, and many others which might be given, it is evident that, taking the passage as a whole, it is of great value in illustrating the fact that Timothy had been a water-drinker up to that period. Paul



knew it, and does not in the least way reprove him : on the contrary, he manifests his approbation of the general habit, and only asks, not commands, that Timothy would depart from it in a small degree, in order to secure better health. If wine, supposing even that alcohol had been part of its character, had only been used under such circumstances, it is equally clear that the ministry would not have been so often disgraced as it has been, by the demoralising sin of intemperance, and the fearful results into which it has led its victims, not only from the pulpit, but also the pew and the Sabbath school. Such, however, was not the case with Timothy. He was a most faithful and attached colleague to Paul, who calls him "son Timothy," "my own son in the faith," "my beloved son," "my work-fellow." Timothy appears to have been a prisoner with Paul at Rome. However, when Paul went into Macedonia, he was left in charge of the Church at Ephesus. The tradition is that there he remained till he eventually suffered death by martyrdom, in the year A.D. 97, while preaching against idolatry near the Temple of Diana.

We may from his life gather some very practical reflections.

(1.) The importance of ministers and office-bearers seeking to be blameless.

(2.) That there is no risk to morals or purity by abstaining from all intoxicating drinks.

(3.) That if we are *obliged*, which is doubtful, to take wine as a medicine, it cannot be also a proper thing either as a food or a luxury.

(4.) It is a duty we owe to ourselves as well as to others, to abstain from that which is known to be cause of so much evil as strong drink.

(5.) The conduct of Timothy does not condemn water-drinking as a rule of life and of health.

(6.) It gives no sanction to the ordinary and common use of intoxicating drinks, any more than every one is

expected to "go to Troas and bring the parchments," which was a positive order to Timothy.

(7.) Those who take *any* kind of wine under the plea that they are the followers of Timothy, are both mistaken in their opinion and wrong in their practice, even if they could prove that he took any at all.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

## JAMES, THE PRACTICAL APOSTLE.



IN a very interesting paragraph in Dean Alford's "Introduction to the General Epistle to St. James," among other things he says that he supposes James to be the "brother of our Lord," son of Joseph and Mary. After referring to the natural inference "that the members of such a family should have grown up just and holy men," as a result which might be hoped for from the teaching of such parents, and, above all, from the presence ever among them of the spotless and bright example of Him, of whom his cousin, according to the flesh, yet not *knowing* Him to be the Messiah, could say, "I have need to be baptised of Thee,"—he goes on then to add: "The absence in the Holy Family of that pseudo-asceticism which has so much confused the traditions respecting them is strikingly proved by the notice, furnished by St. Paul in 1 Cor. ix. 5, that 'the brethren of the Lord' were married men. At the same time there can be no doubt, from the general character of St. James's Epistle, and from the notice of tradition, confirmed as they are by the narrative in the Acts, chap. xxi. 17, etc., and by Gal. ii. 11, etc., that he was in other matters a strong ascetic, and a rigid observer of

the ceremonial Jewish customs. In the testimony of Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebus (H.E. ii. 29), we read: 'This man was holy from his mother's womb. *He drank no wine nor strong drink.*' It is thus evident that, although he was a disciple of Jesus Christ, he was also at the same time a Nazarite of the strictest kind."

Other writers speaking of him, tell us he was surnamed the Just, on account of the remarkable purity of his life. He is said to have been a priest, and observed the laws of the Nazarites from his birth; and Canon Farrar adds, "We may readily believe that he was a Nazarite, perhaps even an ascetic—one who, by past affinities of his character, was bound rather to John the Baptist and the strict communities of the Essenes," who were abstainers from intoxicating drinks. There is a passage in the account given by Hegesippus of St. James the Just (Eusebius, H.E. ii. 23), which, if we may assume it to represent a genuine tradition, is worth notice, and seems to show that Nazarites were permitted even to enter into the Holy of Holies. He says that St. James was consecrated from his birth neither to eat meat, *to drink wine*, to cut his hair, nor to indulge in the use of the bath, and that to him alone was permitted to enter the sanctuary." And Barnes, in his "Notes," after referring to the incorruptible integrity of James, and his exalted regard for the rites and ceremonies of his ancient religion, adds: "If he was educated as a Nazarene, and if he always resided with the Jews, in the very vicinity of the Temple, this is not difficult to account for, and this might be expected to tinge his writings."

To these testimonies may be added that from Lange's "Commentary on St. James," where, among other important statements, we find the following, which bears directly upon the practice of James, and the influence it had upon others. He says: "The Nazarite character of James would also explain the reason why, to judge from later indications, the Essenes in parti-

cular became converts to Christianity, and were more especially attached to the person of James, not only as Jewish Christians, but also in the direction of the Gnostic Ebionitism."

With these sentiments we are better able to appreciate and, perhaps, understand St. James's advice, "To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;" and again, "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin;" and his last words, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." How many have done so through the instrumentality of the Temperance cause, eternity will alone reveal.

Speaking of people exposing themselves to needless temptation, and of the perversion which some are apt to make of the words used by St. James, "Let no man say, I am tempted of God," Dr. Guthrie wisely remarks: "Sometimes temptation is employed as another word for trials; at other times, in a sense so different that, instead of counting it, as the apostle James says, 'all joy,' we should dread nothing more than to fall into divers temptations. *Whatever is calculated to influence our corruptions, and has a tendency, from its own nature and ours, to seduce us into sin,* is temptation; and it is in this sense the word is used, when it is said, 'Let no man say, I am tempted of God.'" How true, therefore, is the advice of Shakespeare, where he says:—

"Resist *beginnings*: whatsoe'er is ill,  
Though it appear light and of little moment,  
Think of it thus—that what it is, augmented,  
Would run to strong and sharp extremities;  
Deem it therefore as a serpent's egg,  
Which, hatched, would, as its kind, grow mischievous;  
Then crush it in the shell."

With regard to temptation, it appears clear that men

and women are only responsible and accountable for those which they court, connive at, or yield to of their own accord. Hence the importance of being on the watch, and endeavouring to do all we can to withstand such as may assail us; and, at the same time, ever to remember that even the wisest and strongest needs so to live as to be conscious that he is in danger of falling. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is a wholesome and needful counsel for us all to bear in mind; and wise is that man or woman who is ever on the alert against self-confidence, or rushing needlessly into danger.

It is not needful to produce proof that John Bunyan, the dreamer, who wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress," dreamed dreams which far exceed most men's waking thoughts; but, if we needed to do so, we could find in the following racy, vigorous, and striking words proof that he was far in advance, of even many who in our days think themselves great lights, and leaders of public sentiment. Speaking through the mouth of Discretion, he says: "Only this general rule ought to be observed—that we forbear eating and drinking such things as we find by experience, or know by common observation, to be prejudicial to health, impediments to virtue and devotion, spurs to vice and passion, by intoxicating *the brain*, heating the blood, disordering the spirits, or by any other way being subservient to the works of the flesh or the temptations of the devil. In so doing we shall do well."

If Bunyan were to arise from his grave *now*, would he not be surprised to find how true it was that science had fully demonstrated what he said to be true—that *alcohol is a brain poison*, and therefore should be kept out of the body.

Man is not a mere machine, nor is he expected to forego the exercise of his powers of thought and reflection when he reads the Word of God. On the contrary, he is evidently responsible for the wise use of both.

For, as Archbishop Whately truly observes, "God has not revealed to us a system of morality such as would have been needed for a being who had no other means of distinguishing right and wrong. On the contrary, the inculcation of virtue and reprobation of vice in Scripture, are in such a tone as seem to pre-suppose a natural power, or a capacity for acquiring the power, to distinguish them. And if a man, denying or renouncing all claims of natural conscience, should practise, without scruple, everything he did not find expressly forbidden in Scripture, and think himself not bound to do anything that is not there expressly enjoined, exclaiming at every turn—

‘Is it so nominated in the bond?’

he would be leading a life very unlike what a Christian's should be."

Now, as it is the nature of all intoxicating drinks to corrupt and destroy the motive power to correct moral action, it is clearly man's duty to let such drinks alone. Intemperance being a moral as well as a physical evil, and as it destroys all sense of moral responsibility, then, as moral beings, we are only doing what we ought in safety to ourselves, to touch it not.

The early historians are generally agreed in stating that James was an active, persevering, and successful apostle; so much so, that the Jews at last were aroused to jealousy, and at length he was condemned by the Jewish Council. Placing him on a pinnacle of the temple, they called upon him to address the people. In a loud voice he said, "Why do ye inquire of Jesus, the Son of Man? He sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven." The people hearing this answered, "Hosanna to the Son of David." This so enraged the Jews who were standing near James, that they cast him headlong down from the roof of the temple. On reaching the ground, yet alive, he prayed for his enemies and while thus

engaged, one of the bystanders struck him with a club and killed him. Even Josephus is said to have recorded that his death was a national crime which helped to bring on the destruction of the city and temple. Hegeſippus, also, in the account of this martyrdom, ſays: "While the Scribes and Pharisees were ſtoning him, 'One of the prieſts of the ſons of Rechab, the ſon of Rechabim, who are mentioned by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out proteſting againſt the crime,' thus intimating that he was in ſome way ſpecially intereſted in him."

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### PETER, THE NEPHALIST.



It is also noticeable that by heretical writers, as they are called, the apostle Peter is added to the list of the *Encratites* or water-drinkers (Epiph. *Her.* xxx. 2; Clemens *Hom.* xii. 6). Whether this was the case or not, it is very striking how very clearly the danger of intoxicating drinks is referred to in his First Epistle. He says, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober" (i. 13). Sober means "being abstinent." It will thus be seen how the ancient notion that he was a Nazarite gives special force to this word, "as also does the figure employed—that of racers who train themselves up to their task, and who, exercising a complete control over the appetites, hope on as they run, looking for the prize. In full accordance with this view are the injunctions against 'former lusts' (ver. 14); to the practice of holiness and fear (ver. 15-17); the figure of 'a holy priesthood' (ver. 9); and the warning against 'fleshly lusts which war against the soul' (ver. 11). Why should Christians,

as a race of priests, be found less careful than were the priests of Levi, who were forbidden to use wine and strong drink when in attendance in the temple, lest they should transgress and displease God? If fleshly lusts are to be avoided, what else but common wisdom is it to renounce their most subtle and dangerous excitement."\*

Again, we find, "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye, therefore, sober, and watch unto prayer (1 Peter iv. 7; and, yet again, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter v. 8). On which Dr. Adam Clarke truly observes: "It is not every one that he can swallow down. Those who are sober and vigilant are proof against him; these he may not swallow down. . . . There is a beauty in this verse and a striking apposition between the first and last words, which I think have not been noticed; Be sober, *neep-sate*, from *nee*, not, and *piein*, to drink—do not swallow down; and the word *katapixæ*, from *kata*, down, and *piein*, to drink. If you swallow strong drink down, the devil will swallow you down. Hear this, ye drunkards, toppers, tipplers, or by whatsoever name ye are known in society, or among your fellow-sinners, strong drink is not only your way to the devil, but the devil's way into you. Ye are such as the devil particularly may swallow down."

\* "Temperance Bible Commentary," p. 383.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE WATER-DRINKERS OF HEAVEN.



**S**PEAKING of the New Jerusalem and its inhabitants and glory, the apostle John says (Rev. xxi. 27), "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth," etc. Over and over again, when illustrating the overthrow and destruction of evil of all kinds, by a remarkable coincidence he speaks of "the wine of the wrath of God," "the winepress of the wrath of God," "the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath," "drunk with the wine of her fornication," "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." While Isaiah also says that "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard." While, on the contrary, when speaking of the redeemed, he says, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi. 6). "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). And among the blessings which Jesus Christ will impart to His redeemed, we are told, "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 17).

We are thus again shown the inestimable blessings of water. Its fulness, freeness, and adaptation to all not only is illustrated on earth, but it becomes the very highest ideal of the blessedness of heaven. Metaphorically, God is called "the fountain of living waters" (Jer. ii. 13). The blood of Jesus Christ which washes believers from all the uncleanness which arises from sin

is called "a fountain." "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. xiii. 1). The legal washings were but shadows and types of this matchless, healing, and purging fountain which never fails to heal all who come and use it. All spiritual blessings and graces communicated by the Holy Spirit are also compared to a fountain. We are told of "A river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High" (Ps. xlv. 4). And in Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters, we are told that "On the bank thereof shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to His months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary" (Ezek. xlvii. 12). Zechariah tells us also (chap. xiv. 8), "It shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." And the final picture of all is given by St. John (Rev. xxii. 1-3), where he says, "And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare all manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse." And it is to this "pure river of the water of life" we are invited to "Come" and "take freely." Yes, pure water is a blessing everywhere, to everybody. Without it man and every living thing would soon cease to exist on earth, and, therefore, it is fit and proper that it should be emblematic of the bliss and purity of heaven. We therefore need not wonder it should be so largely selected as the symbol of salvation, nor that intoxicating wine, should be just as uniformly chosen, because of its defiling and corrupting nature, as the symbol of the Divine wrath and fury. Let us be

content with using the emblem of blessing, and abstain from the symbol of cursing.

To sum up the whole, we think we may with safety conclude that if we require evidence that water is best for *childhood* and youth, we have only to remember Ishmael, Samuel, Daniel, and his companions. For *mothers*—Hagar, Hannah, and Samson's mother. For *fathers*—Rechab. For *men of strength*—Samson, Gideon, and Elijah. For *travellers*—the children of Israel, the Rechabites. For *men of piety*—Elijah, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, Timothy, John the Baptist, Paul, James.

Such facts as these clearly establish, and amply justify, the wisdom of the Divine arrangements, in providing so abundantly and freely, for man's use, such an important article as water. It also shows how vast is the difference He puts upon the value of water, compared with some who profess to be His children. With the clearness of a sunbeam, it also sustains the verdict which has been pronounced by science and experience, in modern times, as to the superiority of water over any kind of intoxicating drinks. Looked at from any standpoint, God's pure, life-sustaining gift to His creatures, stands out infinitely superior in every way to the drinks made by man, inasmuch as they have always resulted in ruin to the health, and loss to the soul, of thousands who have used them; while, on the contrary, water has always, everywhere, and to all people, proved a blessing. As one truly says when contrasting them:—

“Wine, like man its maker, flows,  
Mirth mixed up with many woes;  
But water, made by Him above,  
For ever flows a stream of love.”

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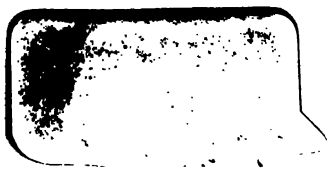
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